

Gayatri Mahima Madhuri

By Mahanidhi Swami

Introduction

Gayatri Mahima Madhuri is a response to the devotees who have asked me over the last ten years to explain the meaning of different *mantras*. Since the Brahma-gayatri is the most famous *mantra*, I have focused on that. In India there are several spiritual groups that propagate the glories of the Brahma-gayatri through the medium of books, tapes, classes, stickers, posters, and so on. They even sell clocks with the Brahma-gayatri written in Sanskrit on the face of the clock. According to them, Brahma-gayatri is the *yuga-dharma*, and chanting it will solve all the problems of Kali-yuga.

There are literally thousands of *mantras* mentioned in the *Vedas*, but this book describes eight *mantras* that are important to Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The reader learns that the actual position of the Brahma-gayatri is to support and assist the primary *mantra* for this age which is the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*, the scripturally acclaimed "great chant for deliverance" for all the souls of Kali-yuga. The astonishing power of the mystical Gopala-mantra will shine forth with all its inestimable glories, what to speak of the Kama-gayatri and the secret *sannyasa mantra*.

Much of the information in this book comes from the *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* by Srila Sanatana Gosvami. The *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* explains various Vedic rituals to point the general class of Vaisnavas towards the worship and service of Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Secondly, it gives rituals specifically meant for Gaudiya Vaisnavas to use for worshiping Radha and Krsna. It also has broad instructions on rituals so that newcomers to Gaudiya Vaisnavism from other Vaisnava traditions may practically engage in worshiping Krsna.

Gayatri Mahima Madhuri includes many verses and commentaries from the *Gopala-tapani Upanisad*, which belongs to the Pippalada section of the *Atharva Veda*, one of the four original *Vedas*. All Vaisnava *acaryas* accept this *Upanisad* as the most authoritative. It is the most significant *Upanisad* for Gaudiya Vaisnavas because it contains a synthesis of all the lessons on *R.adha-Krsnaprema-bhakti* that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave to the six Gosvamis. Therefore, it is the favorite *Upanisad* of devotees interested in cultivating *vraja prema-bhakti* because it establishes the supremacy of Sri Krsna as Vrajendranandana.

The remaining contents of *Gayatri Mahima Madhuri* comes from the books translated by my spiritual master, Nitya-lila pravista Om Vishnupada Sri Srimad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the fifty works listed in the appendix, and the interviews I did with several prominent *vrajavasi brahmanas* and senior Gaudiya Vaisnava *sannyasis*. Although I am limited, imperfect and incapable of writing such an important work, by the causeless mercy of Sri Krsna and the Vaisnavas I have tried to produce a book that is authoritative and true to the glorious Gaudiya Vaisnava *siddhanta*.

In this regard, Srila Rupa Gosvami has written a beautiful verse in *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*: *hrdi yasya preranayd, pravartito 'ham vardka-rupo 'pi, tasya hareh pada-kamalam, vande caitanya-devasya*, "Although I am the lowest of men and have no knowledge, the inspiration to write transcendental literatures about devotional service has been mercifully bestowed upon me. Therefore I am offering my obeisances at the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has given me the chance to write these books." (Cc. *Madhya* 19.134)

Gayatri Mahima Madhuri is but a drop from the vast ocean of nectarine knowledge on this subject. But I hope that this drop, being transcendental in nature, will expand within all the devotees who read this book to fill them with new taste and inspiration for chanting these *mantras*. May all the devotees realize the precious fruits of *bhakti* hidden within the sweet glories of Gayatri.

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Chapter One

DIKŅA AND UPANAYANA

The Three Margas

To properly understand the subject of Gayatri *mantras* one must understand the terms *vedic-marga*, *pancaratrika-marga*, and *bhagavata-marga*. The *vedic-marga*, which includes *Vedic mantras* like the Brahma-gayatri, is based on the four original *Vedas*: *Rg*, *Sama*, *Yajur*, and *Atharva*. Each of these *Vedas* contains four parts:

- 1) *Samhita*—comprise a collection of all the verses in that particular *Veda*.
- 2) The *Brahmanas*—explain the history and the esoteric significance of the *mantras* and sacrifices. They describe the verses of the *Samhitas* and give some details about performing sacrifices. They are ritualistic and meant for householders living in the village. The *Brahmanas* contain the seeds of the knowledge that is systematically elaborated upon in the *Sutras* (i.e. *Srauta*, *Grhiya*, *Dharma*). The *Srautas* describe the basic obligatory Vedic rituals such as the daily *agni hotra* and the big public sacrifices. The *Grhnyas* explain the household rituals, especially the *samskaras*. The *Dharma Sutras* explain the *vamasrama* duties. The *Manu-samhita* and other *Dharma Sastras*, which explain the Dharma Sutras, are more accessible to the ordinary people. All these *sutras* and *sastras* were composed by various great sages like Manu, Narada and Yajnavalkya. These writings tell how to do things and deal basically with the sensual or bodily plane of existence.
- 3) *Aranyakas*—reveal the hidden purpose behind all the *Vedas* and *Brahmanas*. The *Aranyakas* and the *Brahmanas* are similar, but the *Aranyakas* cover more esoteric aspects. The *Aranyakas* explain the metaphysical basis of the rituals described in the *Brahmanas*. In other words, the *Brahmanas* tell how to do a ritual, and the *Aranyakas* explain why a particular ritual is performed. Considered dangerous for ordinary householders, the *Aranyakas* were studied secretly in the forest. Hence the name *Aranyakas* which means "forest."
- 4) *Upanisads*—give the philosophical meaning behind the verses and rituals. The *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas*, and the *Upanisads* are all based on the *Samhita*.

A *brahmachari* will concentrate his studies on the *Samhitas*. A *grhastha* will focus on the *Brahmanas*, which instruct him how to move in the material world in a proper peaceful way. A

vanaprastha will develop detachment by studying the *Aranyakas* to understand what he has done all his life. A *sannyasi* will read the *Upanisads* in order to rise to the transcendental platform and ultimately enter the spiritual world. Of course, all the *asramas* study all four parts, but they will emphasize one of the four according to the needs of their particular *asrama*.

The *vedic-marga* is basically a favorable, pious process that becomes transcendental at the level of the *Upanisads*, whereas the *pancaratrika-marga* is a completely transcendental process emphasizing Deity worship and the practice of *sadhana bhakti*.

"The *pancaratrika-vidhim* made things very simplified. The *vedic-vidhi* is not possible at the present age. *Vedic-vidhi* means one must be begotten by a *brahmana*, and he must have followed the family tradition. Then according to Vedic rites, he can be initiated or offered the sacred thread (*upavita*). But the *pancaratrika-vidhi* is especially meant for this age. Anyone who has a slight tendency to become a devotee should be given a chance. That is Lord Caitanya's special benediction. For example, Haridasa Thakura was born in a Mohammedan family, yet Lord Caitanya made him the *namacarya*, the authority of chanting Hare Krsna." (SPT 27/12/69)

The *pancaratrika-marga*, like the *vedic-marga*, is also an ancient path of self-discovery existing since time immemorial. In the beginning of creation Lord Brahma heard the *Vedas* from Sri Krsna. At that time the demons Madhu and Kaitabha appeared from Maha-Visnu, entered Lord Brahma's mind and stole the *Vedas*. Krsna then manifested the Hayagriva incarnation to kill Madhu and Kaitabha. Lord Brahma asked Krsna to teach him the *Vedas* again, but just the essence since he might die at any moment. For five (*panca*) consecutive nights (*ratri*) Krsna taught Lord Brahma the essence of the *Vedas*. That knowledge became known as the *pancaratric* knowledge, a system of practical philosophy and procedures for worship. There are hundreds of *Pancaratras*.

The *Narada Pancaratra*, for example, was spoken by Lord Siva to Narada Muni and later compiled by Vyasadeva. Srila Sanatana Gosvami's *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* contains the essence of this *pancaratric* knowledge.

Following the *pancaratrika-marga*, which includes Deity worship and chanting Gayatri *mantras*, keeps one off the material plane and fixed on the spiritual platform until love of God is awakened through the process of chanting the holy names of Krsna (*nama-sankirtana*). Perfection is achieved on the *pancaratrika-marga* when a disciple, by the mercy of the *guru*, attains *svarupa-siddhi* (realization of one's eternal spiritual identity). At this time, one fully understands that the Deity is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna, and he worships the Supreme Personality of Godhead through serving His devotees.

The *vedic-marga* incorporates the *Vedanta*, the philosophy based on the *Upanisads*. The essence of *Vedanta* is the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, a completely pure, transcendental work. The *Srimad Bhagavatam* depicts the *bhagavata-marga* as a system of worship and activities performed by those desiring to attain the Supreme Lord through the path of *bhakti* and *nama-sankirtana*. The conditioned soul, however, cannot fully exist on the *bhagavata-marga* because he has various mundane tastes and attractions for sense gratification. **He** is basically still situated on the material platform.

The *pancaratrika-marga* (which includes chanting Gayatri and doing *puja*) regulates and purifies the conditioned soul of his material tendencies, fixes him on the transcendental plane and maintains his fitness for serving the Lord. It also helps him to perfect his chanting of Hare Krsna and progress steadily on the *bhagavata-marga*, which he simultaneously follows. Therefore, the *Bhagavata acaryas* recommend following the *pancaratrika-marga* and *bhagavata-marga* simultaneously.

Mantra

The *Vedas* mention three types of *mantras*: *vedic*, *tantric*, *puranic*. Each of these can be further divided into *sattvic*, *rajasic*, and *tamasic mantras*. *Sattvic* (mode of goodness) *mantras* are chanted for light, wisdom, divine love, compassion, and God realization. They destroy all karma, bring peace, and lead to perfection after death. *Rajasic* (mode of passion) *mantras* are chanted for progeny and material prosperity. Unlike *sattvic mantras*, which remove karma, *rajasic mantras* force men to take rebirth to reap the fruits of their karma. *Tamasic mantras* (mode of ignorance), popularly called "black magic," are sinful. They are generally used to propitiate spirits, harm others, and perform vicious deeds.

The original spiritual letters are endowed with specific powers, and in particular combinations they assume more power in relation to certain Deities. These combinations of letters are called *bijas* or seeds, and they combine to form words. When these words are connected in a particular order, they have special powers to represent a Deity in full. These combinations are called *mantras*. The power then manifested in the whole *mantra* is greater than that of any of its constituent sounds.

The *mantras*, which are non-different from the Deity, are an eternal manifestation of the Deity and are spiritual by nature. By repetition of the *mantra*, the worshiper invokes the mercy of the Deity whose *mantra* he repeats. Chanting these *mantras* (i.e. *pancaratrika* Gayatri *mantras*) helps one realize the transcendental form of the Deities. The *sadhaka* thus overcomes illusion and regains his original spiritual position.

The *mantra* is an intrinsic form of the Lord. By the mercy of Guru and Vaisnavas, who are embodiments of Krsna's mercy, Krsna enters the disciple's heart in the form of *mantra*. The *mantra*, acts to cleanse the mind and heart of the disciple, and make him fit for serving the transcendent Lord.

There are six basic types of *mantras* used in Deity worship: *i*

- 1) Dhyana Mantras—meditation *mantras* used to mentally invoke the Lord's transcendental form, abode, and pastimes.
- 2) Bija Mantras—seed *mantras* for meditation and purification of articles used in *puja*.
- 3) Mula Mantras—root *mantras*, being the essence of the Deity, are recited along with each article of worship as a means of addressing the Lord.
- 4) Stutis & Stotras—prayers chanted before, during, or after worship to glorify the name, form, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord.
- 5) Pranama Mantras—prayers for offering obeisances to the Lord at the end of worship.
- 6) Gayatri Mantras—Vedic or Pancaratrika *mantras* used to worship the Lord, invoking the three principles of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, *prayojana*.

The word Gayatri indicates a specific poetic meter (*chandas*) sung in Vedic hymns. Vedic *mantras*, such as Brahma-gayatri, are called *sabda-brahma* (eternal, spiritual [*aprakṛta*] vibrations representing God in the form of sound). In summary, a *mantra* is a combination of particular energies in the form of sound, and its recitation evokes those energies externally and internally. Every *mantra* is a combination of specific letters, words, meanings, rhythms, and tunes.

There are four aspects of all bona fide Vedic and *pancaratrika mantras*:

- 1) Rsi or sage—is the medium or the means of communication between God and man through whom the *mantra* was given to mankind. Every *mantra* has a presiding *rsi* or saintly person who first heard the *mantra* in his meditation and subsequently spread it for the benefit of others. The Gayatri *mantra*, for example, was revealed to Visvamitra Muni after a transcendental experience in meditation, so he is accepted as the Rsi of the Brahma-gayatri *mantra*.
- 2) Chandas—is the poetic meter of a specific *mantra* such as Gayatri, Anustap, and Jagati. "The Vedic meters are Gayatri, Usnik, Anustup, Brhati, Parikṭi, Tristup, Jagati, Aticchanda, Atyasti, Atijagati and Ativirat. The Gayatri meter has twenty-four syllables, the Usnik twenty-eight, the Anustup thirty-two, and so on, each meter having four more syllables than the previous one. Vedic sound is called *brhati*, or most expansive, and thus it is not possible for ordinary living entities to understand all the technical details in this matter." (SB 11.21.41 v/p) "The *Visnu Parana* says the seven horses yoked to the sun-god's chariot are named Gayatri, Brhati, Usnik, Jagati, Tristup, Anustup and Parikṭi. These names of various Vedic meters designate the seven horses that carry the sun-god's chariot." (SB 5.21.16p.)
- 3) Ista-deva—is the controlling or presiding Deity of a *mantra*, or the Deity worshiped by the *mantra*. There are thirty-three million *devatas* (demigods), each having their own abode in the universe. Every *devata* has a name or *mantra* for which he is the presiding Deity. Chanting a *devata's* personal *mantra* invokes that *devata*, who will respond according to the intensity of the meditation. If one receives a *mantra* of a Deity or *devata* from a *guru*, and sincerely chants that *mantra* along with worship and meditation, then that Deity will appear either physically or in one's meditation to fulfill one's desires.
- 4) Viniyoga—is the use, function or purpose for chanting the *mantra* such as performing a *homa*, *samskara*, or to chant *japa*. Mostly we use the *mantras* for chanting Gayatri *japa*. So the *vinīyoga* is chanting *japa*.

In *Sat-kriya-sara Dipika*, Gopala Bhatta Gosvami says, "The purpose of this system is to guarantee that one understands the meaning, function, correct heritage, and intonation of the *mantra* being chanted. As a rule, when uttering any Vedic *mantra* one should identify the *rsi* or saintly person who preserved the *mantra*, the *chandas* or meter of the *mantra*, the Deity being invoked in the *mantra*, and the function or purpose of chanting the *mantra* (doing a *frueyajna* for example)."

A traditional ritual before chanting the Brahma-gayatri is to offer obeisances, invoke blessings, and remember these four items.

- 1) Rsi—Chant the name of the *rsi* of a particular *mantra* while touching the head, thereby offering obeisances to that *rsi* in gratitude for his having enriched the world with this inspiring *mantra*.
- 2) Chandas—Touch the mouth while mentioning the particular *chandas* of the *mantra*. (Brahma-gayatri is *gayatri* meter or *chandas*)
- 3) Devata—(*Ista-deva*) Chant the name of the Deity of the *mantra* while touching the heart to indicate the seat of the *devata* and pray to him to please accept the prayer.

4) Viniyoga—Keep the purpose of chanting a particular *mantra* or prayer fixed in the mind. The purpose of chanting the Brahma-gayatri is to attain pure transcendental knowledge of God, become peaceful, and learn how to surrender and eternally serve the lotus feet of Radha and Krsna in pure love.

Mantra Potency

All Vedic *mantras* (those coming from the *Srutis*—*Rg, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva Vedas*), such as the Brahma-gayatri, are eternal sound vibrations of spiritual import. The *Vedas* are *apauruseya*, not composed by any man at a certain point in history. The *mantras* of the *Vedas* are eternal representations of God in the form of sound, *sabda brahma*. By repetition of a particular *mantra* under authorized guidance a purified person can realize the spiritual purpose of the *mantra*.

The *Narada-pancaratra*, *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya*, *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, and many other scriptures explain that the potency of a *mantra* manifests only when it is received from a bona fide spiritual master and recited without impurities. Although one may see *mantras* written in books by the previous *acaryas*, by Srila Prabhupada, or in this one, and then try to chant them, these *mantras* will produce results only when received through the process of *diksa*. *Mantras* are like seeds in that they contain vast potencies within them, but they need outside factors to manifest their power.

The tiny seed of a banyan tree contains the form of a huge, full-grown tree. Placing the seed directly into the ground, however, will not produce a tree. But if a sparrow eats the seed and passes it on the ground with its stool, then a majestic banyan will grow forth. The banyan seed must be processed in this way to give results. Similarly, if one begins chanting a *mantra* after randomly hearing or reading it in a book, it will not produce *Krsna-prema*. But if one properly receives the *mantra* by hearing from *apremika-bhakta*, then that *mantra*, which is coated with the *guru's prema*, will produce *prema* in the heart of the sincere disciple.

"A *mantra* is purified when chanted with proper knowledge." (SB 11.24.32) In the purport to this verse Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura says, "A *mantra* becomes purified when it issues from the mouth of a Sad-guru. The bona fide spiritual master instructs the disciple in the method, meaning and ultimate purpose of the *mantra*."

"It is confidential in this sense: one may receive a published *mantra* anywhere, but unless it is accepted through the chain of disciplic succession, the *mantra* does not act. It is said by authoritative sources that any *mantra* chanted without having been received from the disciplic succession has no efficacy." (SB 4.8.53 p.) "*Mantras* and the process of devotional service have special power, provided they are received from the authorized person." (SB 8.16.24 p.)

Even the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*, though not waiting for nor requiring initiation, has more effect when received from an advanced devotee. *Acaryas* claim that chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* without receiving or hearing it from an advanced Krsna conscious Vaisnava will bring one the fruits of *bhukti* or *mukti* but not the precious sweet ambrosia of *prema-bhakti*. The hearts of pure devotees are compared to gem-filled mountains of Radha-Madhava *prema*; rivers of *madhurya-rasa* rush down from these mountains to drown anyone who accepts the mercy. The holy name chanted by a pure devotee is saturated with *Krsna-prema*. When this

prema-nama is poured into the ear of the eager disciple, it nourishes the tiny creeper of devotion and eventually produces the nectarean fruit of *prema-bhakti*.

"When the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is chanted by a pure devotee of the Lord in love, it has the greatest efficacy on hearers, and as such this chanting should be heard from the lips of a pure devotee of the Lord, so that immediate effects can be achieved." (SSR)

The pure sound vibration from a realized *guru* works like a forest fire to burn up all the sins and impurities within the mind and heart of the disciple. When Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna were traveling on a chariot through the covering of the universe, the Lord used His Sudarṣana *cakra* to penetrate the dense and fearful layers. In the same way, Kṛṣṇa's holy name acts like a *cakra* to burn away all the dark coverings of a *sādhaka's* heart and clear the path to *prema*. The effect of hearing a *mantra* from an advanced, empowered devotee also depends on the intensity of the *sādhaka's* hankering for perfection in pure love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. In great humility and lamentation, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu expressed the mood of the unfortunate conditioned soul.

sarva-sakri name dila kariya vibhaga dmdra durdaiva,—name
ndhi anuraga

"O Govinda, You have invested Your full potencies in each individual holy name, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attachment for chanting Your holy names." (Cc. *Antya* 20.19)
Attachment will come if one is fortunate enough to hear the holy name from a truly empowered Vaisnava. However, attachment for chanting and serving Kṛṣṇa will not manifest within the *sādhaka* who hears the holy name from a Vaisnava devoid of *kṛṣṇa-sakti*.

kali 'kalera dharma—kṛṣṇa-ndama-sankirtana, kṛṣṇa-sakti vina nahe
tara pravartana

"Unless one is empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, one cannot spread the holy names of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra* throughout the world." (Cc. *Antya* 7.11) Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī Thākura called this "alphabet *nama*," wherein only the letters of the holy name are received, and not the fully manifest beautiful forms of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa dancing together in the *yugala-mantra* for *prema-dharma*. A bona fide spiritual master must have the strength of devotional purity to empower the holy name that he bestows upon his disciple. If for some reason the *guru* is not empowered, then a *sādhaka* can still receive full strength for *bhajana* by hearing from a realized and empowered *sikṣa-guru*. In the Gaudiya tradition the *uttama-adhikari* devotees come down to the *madhyama* platform to preach either as *dikṣa* or *sikṣa gurus*. During His South Indian preaching tour Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed thousands of people, who had already received *dikṣa mantras* elsewhere, to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. By Mahāprabhu's *sikṣa* they received the power to chant, realize the full potential of Kṛṣṇa's holy names, and spread the mercy to others.

kṛṣṇa-ndama mahima sastra-sadhu-muklie j'dni ndama madhuna
aiche khdn ndhi suni

"One has to learn about the beauty and transcendental position of the holy name of the Lord by hearing the revealed scriptures from the mouths of devotees. Nowhere else can we hear of the sweetness of the Lord's holy name." (Cc. *Antya* 1.101)

"It is said in the *Padma Purana*: *atah sn-krsna-ndmddi na bhaved grdhyam indriyaih*. Chanting and hearing of the transcendental holy name of the Lord cannot be performed by the ordinary senses. The transcendental vibration of the Lord's holy name is completely spiritual. Thus it must be received from spiritual sources and must be chanted after having been heard from a spiritual master. One who hears the chanting of the Hare Krsna *mantra* must receive it from the spiritual master by aural reception." (Cc. *Antya* 1.101 p.)

"Lord Siva voluntarily came to bless the sons of King Pracinabarhi as well as do something beneficial for them. He personally chanted the *mantra* so that the *mantra* would be more powerful, and he advised that the *mantra* be chanted by the King's sons. When a *mantra* is chanted by a great devotee, the *mantra* becomes more powerful. Although the Hare Krsna *mahd-mantra* is powerful in itself, a disciple upon initiation receives the *mantra* from his spiritual master, for when the *mantra* is chanted by the spiritual master, it becomes more powerful. Lord Siva advised the sons of the King to hear him attentively, for inattentive hearing is offensive." (SB 4.24.32 p.)

"There are different types of *mantras* for different types of devotees (e.g. Rama-mantra, Nrsimha-mantra, Gopala-mantra and so on). Each and every *mantra* has its own spiritual significance. The spiritual master has to select a *mantra* for his disciple, according to the disciple's ability to chant different *mantras*." (Cc. *Madhya* 24.331 p.)

At the time of initiation, the *glim* gives a Vedic or *pancaratrika mantra* to the disciple according to the tradition of *the parampara*. While doing *puja* a duly initiated disciple who is free from ignorance will realize the relationship between the spiritual meaning of the *mantras* he chants *torjapa*, *arcana*, and the identity of the Deity being worshiped.

Although there are specific *mula* and Gayatri *mantras* for meditation upon the spiritual master, the *sastras* advise seeing the spiritual master in all the *mantras* received from him. The *Vedas* say: *yo mantrah sa giiruh sdksdt, yo gimih sa harih svayam, guru-yasya bhavet tustas-tasya tusto harih svayam*, "The *mantra* which is given by the *guru* is itself the *guru*, and the *guru* is directly the Supreme Lord Hari. If one pleases the spiritual master, then he also pleases Sri Hari Himself." *Acaryas* explain that through the medium of a *mantra* the spiritual master conveys his internal mood of service to Radha and Krsna to his disciple. The disciple will not perceive this immediately, but he will gradually understand everything by *guru bhakti, seva* and meditation upon the given *mantra*. The *mantra*, therefore, is the direct representation of the spiritual master.

The story of Gopa-kumara in *Brhad-bhagavatamrta* illustrates the power of chanting *mantra*. Due to good karma, Gopa-kumara took birth in a cowherd family in Vrndavana. While taking the cows out one day he noticed a saintly person singing and crying profusely. Gopa-kumara became attracted and started serving him by bringing milk. One day the saint gave him the Gopala-mantra.

After chanting just half the *mantra* Gopa-kumara started crying, and upon completing it he fell unconscious. The saint, however, disappeared without even teaching how to chant the *mantra* properly. Nonetheless, Gopa-kumara started chanting it faithfully, and soon all his material desires vanished. By continually chanting the Gopala-mantra he traveled throughout the universe and into the spiritual sky. After visiting Brahmaloaka, Sivaloka, Vaikuntha, Ayodhya,

Dvaraka, and Mathura, Gopa-kumara finally met Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndavana. He attained this extraordinary fortune by chanting the Gopala-mantra.

The results of chanting a *mantra* depend on the conception in the mind while chanting it. Ordinarily, the Brahma-gayatri gives *mukti*, but understanding that Savita is Lord Viṣṇu takes the chanter to Vaikuntha. If one chants the Kama-gayatri understanding that it is non-different from Kṛṣṇa in His ultimate *rasika* form, then one will attain that. It is the same as chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra*, which contains everything. If one chants Hare Kṛṣṇa with material desires, he will attain those; and if one wants *mukti*, one will get it. If one chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra* understanding that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are personally present there enjoying intimate pastimes in Vṛndavana, then one will attain Their eternal loving service. Ultimately the content of the *mantra* cannot be separated from the *sādhaka's* mentality. Both have a part to play.

"One must know the meaning of the *mantra* which he is reciting; without knowing the meaning of a *mantra*, one cannot reach the goal." (*Yajñavalkya-smṛti*)

Upanayanam

"The word *samskaras* means "perfect duties." It is a highly beneficial, purifying, and sanctifying ceremony. Its rite rests on a series of actions in harmony with metaphysical rules that manifest the invisible reality in the visible world of sense perception. *Samskaras* eradicate bad karma and increase the auspicious influence of material nature." (BOS)

Samskaras (rites of purification for mind and body) exist in all religions and in all countries. The purer the religion is, the more its *samskaras* are sacred and complete. Purification rituals are needed because the original spiritual nature of every conditioned soul is covered by contamination. Without *samskaras* the life of the conditioned soul remains impure. *Samskaras* are rites of sanctification which purify the consciousness, attach one to God, and ultimately lead to *prema*.

Performing a *samskara* renders an individual fit to execute a particular duty. Prescribed in various Vedic texts, the *samskaras* are a chain of rites beginning from birth. Upanayanam is the most important *samskara* because it makes one eligible to chant the *Vedas* and perform Vedic rites. Upanayanam is also known as *brahmopadesa* because the *acarya* teaches (*upadesa*) the newly initiated disciple how to realize *brahman*.

The word *Upanayanam* means adjacent to, supplemental to the eye, or keeping one close by. Upanayanam is the eye of spiritual knowledge, or the vision induced by proper initiation into the Gayatri. The term *Upanayanam* is connected with the Vedic *gurukula* tradition wherein the preceptor would keep his students close by in order to train them in Vedic rites and impart religious teachings. The Upanayanam is usually done by the *acarya* during adolescence.

The Upanayanam is a major *samskara* or purificatory rite of life. In this ceremony a young boy is initiated into spiritual knowledge by the *guru* (traditionally the father) who gives the child the Brahma-gayatri mantra, defines its meaning, and explains the method of chanting. At this time, the boy takes the dress of a *brahmachari*, accepts the *upavīta* (sacred thread), and begins learning the duties of a civilized man. After completing his spiritual education the celibate boy may take up household life.

Since He was born in a *brahmana* family, Lord Caitanya also accepted Upanayanam and received the Brahma-gayatri. Later He took *diksa* from Isvara Puri and received the ten-syllable Gopala-mantra. The ten-syllable Gopala-mantra is generally given only to born *brahmanas*, but the eighteen-syllable Gopala-mantra mentioned in the *Brahma-samhita* is open to everyone.

Upanayanam is a Vedic *samskara* wherein one receives the Vedic *mantra* known as Brahma-gayatri. The word *upa* means near, and *nayanam* means leading near the teacher. Upanayanam then is a process that brings the student closer to the teacher, who in turn brings him closer to God by giving him transcendental knowledge. The first birth is the seminal birth. Upanayanam and Brahma-gayatri are the second birth (*dvija*).

Why is Upanayanam called the second birth? In the first birth a baby is born from the *virya* (semen or vital energy) of the father which is dissipated downwards below the navel into the mother's womb. In the second birth, however, the spiritual progeny (*jnanaputra*) are produced by the spiritual father (Vaisnava *acarya*) who has retained his *virya* and drawn it upward (rather than dissipating it downwards) from the navel region. The *virya*, conserved through celibacy, rises up to nourish the brain and gives spiritual purity and enlightenment.

The *acarya* then passes this vital force of purity onto the disciple by elevating him to the *brahminical* platform by giving him his second birth. Upanayanam is called the second birth because by this *samskara* one attains a spiritual regeneration with the *guru* or *acarya* acting as the father and Savitr, or Gayatri Devi, as the mother.

Upanayanam and the Gaudiya Tradition

There is not much reference to Upanayanam in the Gaudiya tradition. The *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* says one should perform his Vedic *andpancaratricsandhyas*, meaning the Brahma-gayatri and other Gayatri *mantras*, according to the rules. Lord Caitanya and His followers went through the *samskaras* and got Upanayanam. At that time Upanayanam meant only the Vedic *mantra*. The other *mantras* are added at *pancaratric diksa*, an initiation function wherein a disciple receives *mantras* which do not come from the *Srutis*, such as the Gopala-mantra and Kama-gayatri.

In fact, the Gayatris we chant remain more or less mysterious, since they are not explained explicitly as part of *sadhana*. They seem to be there because they are among the *diksa mantras*. One reason for this is that *hari-nama* has taken the place of *mantras* as the *sadhana*. Gaudiya Vaisnavas spend hours each day chanting Hare Krsna, whereas other *sampradayas*, without *hari nama-sankirtana*, have only the *japa sadhana* of their Deity *mantras* and Gayatris. However, since *sadhana bhakti* enjoins *diksa*, the *mantras* are given anyway. The use of the *mantras* seems clear. The Gayatri *mantras*, which are chanted three times a day, are meant for meditation, praising, and calling out for the Lord's mercy.

Due to the independent desire to control and exploit the material energy, the conditioned soul has the tendency to commit sins. Therefore, he needs to perform the *pancaratrika samskaras* to purify himself of the enjoying spirit which induces him to sin. The rules of *pancaratrika* regulate one's life and give inner strength and purity. Thus adopting a *sattvic* lifestyle, the practitioner can more easily avoid sin.

The six Gosvamis of Vrndavana followed this process of giving *pancaratrika diksa*. Before the time of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, spiritual masters gave only the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* and *pancaratrika diksa*. Traditionally, a *brahmana* boy would receive Upanayanam from the family gum. Those not born in *brahmana* families did not get it. To establish that Gaudiya Vaisnavas are unique and should be respected as *brahmanas*, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura gave Upanayanam (which includes the Brahma-gayatri and *brahmana* thread) to all classes of devotees, regardless of their birth. To qualify all classes of Gaudiya Vaisnavas for *brahmin* initiation he utilized the *panca-samskara* system (five purificatory rituals described under the next subheading).

"There are three types of *brahmanas*: 1) Dvijas—those initiated with Brahma-gayatri but devoid of Vedic knowledge; 2) Vipras—those initiated with Brahma-gayatri who have studied the Vedic knowledge; 3) Vaisnavas—those initiated with Brahma-gayatri who have realized the purpose (*yedanta*) of Vedic knowledge, to know and serve Lord Visnu or Sri Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although many Gaudiya Vaisnavas are not born in *brahmana* families and are often beyond the usual age of eight to ten years old, they can still be initiated as bona fide *brahmanas*.

This unique opportunity was inspired by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, established in the modern age by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, and introduced throughout the world by Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness). By chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* a Gaudiya Vaisnava becomes purified and rises to the *pancaratrika* standard. Then by observing the *panca-samskaras* he is further purified, attains *brahminical* qualities, and becomes eligible for Vedic *diksa*, initiation into the Brahma-gayatri.

Even though a Vaisnava may be of lower birth and beyond the age of youth, he can become purified and transformed into a qualified *brahmana* by undergoing these sanctifying processes. To prove this phenomena, Sri Jiva Gosvami uses the example of turning bell metal into gold by alchemy.

The Panca Samskaras

"Gaudiya Vaisnavas accept five sacraments (*panca-samskaras*) of purification. Upon adopting these *panca-samskaras*, a faithful person begins *bhajana-kriya*, the personal worship of God, and eventually attains pure love of Krsna. These five sacraments have both internal and external aspects. *Tapa*, *pundra*, *nama*, *mantra*, and *yaga*—these five rites are the *panca-samskaras*. They are the basis of intense devotion to Lord Hari.

1) *Tapa*—using sandalwood paste to write the holy names on the body: Jaya Gaura-Nitai, Hare Krsna, Sri Radhe, and so on. *Tapa* also includes internal cleansing of the heart by repentance, and developing a genuine aversion to material life.

2) *Urdhva-pundra*—marking the body with *tilaka* to designate it as a temple for the Lord's service. The *tilaka* symbol represents Krsna's footprint. Seeing it, the devotee thinks, 'I have Krsna's footprint on my head. He is my eternal master, and I am His eternal servant. In all times, places, and circumstances I have an eternal relationship with Krsna.' In a broader sense, *urdhva-pundra* means all the things related to one's identity as an eternal servant of Krsna, such as neck beads, *dhوتي*, *sari*, and *anjapa mala*. *Urdhva-pundra* also means the illumination of the body, mind, soul and attachment to the Supreme Lord.

3) Nama—receiving the name of Hari (Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra*) in the ear from the preceptor and a spiritual name as Kṛṣṇa's servitor like Rādhā-carana dāsa. By taking shelter of the holy names and tasting the nectar therein, a disciple realizes his spiritual identity and rejoices in devotional service.

4) Mantra—receiving the eighteen-syllable Gopāla-mantra from the spiritual master. By giving a *mantra* the teacher helps his student more easily experience the nectar of the holy name. The *mantra* also helps the disciple taste a particular flavor or mellow in the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

5) Yaga—utilizing the gum-given *mantras* to worship Śrī Murti or Salagrama. Such *puja* purifies and protects the devotee from the danger of falling into *maya*. *Yaga*, the fifth and final *samskara*, is the procedure of worshiping the Lord by employing all the mental and physical faculties of seeing, touching, smelling, tasting, thinking, discriminating and acting. A person without *yaga* has no life, and he is forced to reap the results of his karma.

"Without accepting the *panca-samskara* system a conditioned soul cannot develop intense devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, *panca-samskara* is extremely necessary." (*Panca Samskara* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura)

Upanayanam is a purely Vedic function to facilitate study of the *Vedas* and performance of Vedic rituals. The Upanayanam *samskara*, however, does not play a crucial role in the Gauḍīya Sampradaya. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī Thākura gave Brahma-gayatri along with *pancaratrika mantras* in accordance with the *pancaratrika* philosophy that an initiated Vaisnava is even more qualified than a *brahmana*. Following his *guru maharaja*, our spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupada, also combined the Vedic (Brahma-gayatri) and *pancaratrika* initiations. In ISKCON, *dikṣa* means receiving Upanayanam (Brahma-gayatri) and six other *mantras* at the same time: Guru-mantra, Guru-gayatri, Gaura-mantra, Gaura-gayatri, Gopāla-mantra, and Kama-gayatri.

Dikṣa

"The Sanskrit word *dikṣa*. is formed of two syllables: *dl* which comes from the root *dan* meaning to "give spiritual knowledge" (*divya-jnana*); and *ksd* from the root *ksaya* meaning "to destroy sinful activities." *Dikṣa* is the process by which a conditioned soul attains transcendental wisdom and freedom from sin." (*Viṣṇu-yamala*)

Dikṣa is a process of spiritual initiation through which the guru imparts transcendental knowledge to the disciple. *Dikṣa* clears all previous bad tendencies and commitments. One begins a new life awakened in divine knowledge. By giving *dikṣa*, Śrī Guru mercifully slackens the bondage *oimaya*, infuses transcendental energy into the disciple's heart, and awakens an awareness of his eternal relationship with Śrī Hari.

"*Dikṣa* is that religious undertaking which bestows *divya-jnana* or transcendental knowledge and destroys *papa* (sins), *papa-bija* (seed of sin), and *avidyā* (ignorance) to the root." (HBV) "*Divya-jnana* is transcendental knowledge contained within a *mantra* which reveals the form and identity of Supreme Lord (*bhagavat-svarupa*) as well as the knowledge of the *sadhaka's* particular relationship with the Lord (*sambandha-jnana*)." (*Bhakti-sandarbhā, anuc.* 283)

By giving the Gopāla-mantra (Kṛṣṇa-mantra) the spiritual master dispels the *jīva's* aversion toward the Lord, and directs his attention toward serving Him. He gives the disciple transcendental knowledge about the Supreme Lord, the living entity, and the illusory energy.

By this knowledge the disciple's sins and ignorance are all destroyed to the root. The procedure of *diksa* is not completed in one day; rather, it starts from the day , of initiation.

In Goloka Vrndavana, even Krsna's flute took *mantra-diksa*.

*sad'vamsatas tava janih purusottamasya pdnau sthitir muralike
saralhsi jdyd kasmdt tvayd sakhi guror visamd grhita
gopdngand--gana--vimohana'mantra-diksd*

"Srimati Radharani said, 'My dear friend the flute, it appears that you have been born of a very good family, for your residence is in the hands of Sri Krsna. By birth you are simple and are not at all crooked. Why then have you taken initiation into this dangerous *mantra* (*mantra-diksa*) that enchants the assembled *gopis*?'
(Cc.Antya 1.162)

Qualities of a Guru

From whom should one *accept mantra-diksa*? The *Kramadipika* states that *mantras* should be taken from an *uttama-mahabhagavata* devotee of Krsna who knows the *sastras* and the Vaisnava *siddhanta*. The *Bhaktavali* says that a qualified *guru* should be pure in his dealings and saintly in character. He should be free from anger, pride and all material desires. He must be learned in Vedic *sastras*, speak sweetly, possess a handsome appearance, be full of compassion and do good to others. He should be peaceful, worship Radha and Krsna, be fully engaged in Their service and attached to chanting *harinama*.

The *Visnumrri* says that a spiritual master who demands fame, wealth, and comforts from the disciples is not worthy to be called *guru*. The spiritual preceptor should have the twenty-six qualities of a devotee, be free from material desires, absorbed in pure devotional service of Krsna, and capable of destroying the disciple's doubts by speaking with full logic and reason. The *Tattvasagar* states that *mantra-diksa* should never be taken from a person who is idle, greedy, or attached to sense gratification.

"Sri Guru is the master who is fixed in *brahman* (*brahma-nistham*). He is a realized soul who dispels ignorance. He is simple, honest, humble, serene, free from false ego, and ever united with God. Lust, anger, greed, envy, arrogance and infatuation (the six enemies of conditioned souls) have been totally converted into love, compassion, benevolence, auspiciousness, selfless action, and forgiveness. He is the embodiment of all the great virtues.

"He knows and lives the spirit of the *sastras*. He follows and respects the masters of the past, and though upholding the tradition, gives new meaning to it. He is the light showing the way and he lives in the highest plane of Krsna consciousness. He is one with the desire of the Lord and acts accordingly. He strictly follows the exemplary path of *dharma*. He is the compassionate father and benevolent mother of his disciples. He shows his love to all including plants, animals, and inanimate objects.

"He lives to serve. He teaches and practices what he preaches. He lives and loves for the sake of the Supreme Lord. His words are wisdom. He is child-like and always happy, for he is fixed in the Truth. Dualities do not affect him. Heat and cold, pleasure and pain, loss and gain are one and the same. Controlled in body, mind, and speech, he delights independent of any object.

He has no prejudices, nor does he divert His mind from the Divine to judge others. Saving people from sin, he lovingly guides, befriends, and protects them. He blesses all and offers the treasure of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. Pure love of God emanates from every pore of his body. Within himself he enjoys a constant festival of bliss, and gives bliss to all who seek." (GHM adapted)

In *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī describes both the ordinary and the special characteristics of a bona fide spiritual master.

Ordinary Characteristics

"The spiritual master is learned in the *Vedas* and *bhakti-sastras* like the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. He destroys the doubts in his disciples, and fills them with faith. He understands Kṛṣṇa's glories as the benefactor, protector, and so on of His devotees. Because of his firm faith and worship of the Lord he has realized the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because of his purity and surrender he has received Kṛṣṇa's mercy potency (*krpa-saktimum*). Thus the spiritual master is empowered to infuse mercy into his disciples and bring them along the path of *bhakti*.

"He has attained the grace of his own *guru* by being similarly devoted to his *guru's* lotus feet. He is completely peaceful and fully surrendered to *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. He has offered his heart to Kṛṣṇa. His body is free from disease or invalidity. He has controlled his senses, and has defeated the six enemies headed by lust, anger, greed, envy, madness, and illusion. He has been blessed by *sādhus*, knows the immaculate path of the *Vedas*, and is in constant transcendental consciousness (*brahma nistha*). Through his devotion he is deeply attached to Kṛṣṇa." (HBV 1.32-35)

Exceptional Characteristics

"A *guru* who is born in a pure family; who is sinless and faultless himself; who is well-behaved, belongs to a particular *asrama*, free from anger, knows the *Vedas* and all other scriptures, has faith, does not find faults, speaks affectionately, is young, nice to behold and smartly dressed, engaged in the welfare of all living entities, nonviolent, intelligent, prideless, satisfied, grateful, pure-hearted and merciful, able to judge transcendental truths, endowed with parental love, expert in *puja* of the Supreme Lord, affectionate towards his disciples, able to punish and reward, and who knows all kinds of arguments and counter-arguments—is an ocean of glories." (HBV 1.38-41)

Any devotee who is endowed with such attributes, and filled with parental love for his disciples can act as a bona fide *gum*. Such a spiritual master is able to destroy the various obstacles in a disciple's *bhajana*, bless him *withprema*, and deliver him to the lotus feet of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Qualities of a Disciple

The *Muktavali* says a person who is obedient, truthful, of good character, intelligent, free from pride, faithful to *gum*, prideless and kind-hearted is qualified to receive *mantra-dikṣa*. On the other hand, the *Agastya-saṁhita* declares that one who is lazy, roguish, arrogant, miserly, malicious, proud, egoistic, pesky, cruel, ill behaved, disobedient to *gum*, attached to material enjoyment, or earns money illegally should never be given *mantra-dikṣa*. If any *guru* accepts such an unqualified disciple, then both he and the disciple go to hell.

"The disciple should be pure, inquisitive, and serious about following spiritual disciplines. He should please the *guru* through service, devotion, dedication and reverence. Patience and perseverance are the main characteristics of a disciple. When the *guru* is pleased with the disciple's service and his development of good qualities, he will teach him *sambandha-jnana*, (knowledge of his relationship with God), protect him, and lead him to the goal of *Krsna-prema*. Surrender on the part of the disciple and protection on the part of the *guru* are both necessary." (GHM)

The *Sarasangraha* says that the spiritual master must take a share of the disciple's sins; just as a king reaps the results of his subject's actions. For these reasons, a wise preceptor will think very deeply before bestowing *mantra-diksa* upon anyone.

Proper Time for Mantra Diksa

The months of Vaisaka, Asvina, Kartika, Agrahayana, Magha, Phalgun, and Caitra are auspicious for receiving *mantra diksa*. All days of the week are good except Tuesday and Saturday. Good *tithis* for *mantra diksa* are *dvitiya*, *pancami*, *sasthi*, *dvadasi*, *trayodasi*, and *purnima*. There are exceptions to these rules.

The *Tattvasagar* says *aparama-bhagavata acarya* can give *mantra diksa* at any time to a sincere and honest aspirant. Achieving *darsana* of a Sad-guru is a rarely attained fortune. The holy command of such a preceptor surpasses all considerations of time, place, and circumstance. If the Sad-guru desires, *mantra diksa* can be taken at any time, in any place, and in any condition. Such is the transcendental benediction of the all-merciful Sad-guru!

Chapter Two

BRAHMA GAYATRI

Identity of Brahma-gayatri

"Of the hymns in the *Sama Veda*, I am the *Brhat-sama*, and of poetry I am the Gayatri. Of months I am Margasirsa (November-December), and of seasons I am flower-bearing spring." (BG 10.35)

"Vedic literatures explain that that sound vibration which can elevate one from mental concoction is called Gayatri." (TLC ch. 31)

"The Gayatri *mantra* is also mentioned in first verse of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Because the Gayatri *mantra* is especially meant for God realization, it represents the Supreme Lord. The Gayatri is considered to be the sound incarnation of *brahman*." (BG 10.35 p.)

All *dvijas* and *brahmanas* irrespective of their sectarian denominations chant Brahma-gayatri. Vaisnavas, Advaitins, Dvaitins, Visistadvaitans, Saivites and so on all chant the Brahma-

gayatri. Of course, they appreciate the meaning of the *mantra* differently in accordance with their respective tenets. The scriptures proclaim that Brahma-gayatri is the mother of the *Vedas*.

Ancient Vedic tradition prescribes chanting Brahma-gayatri as *sandhya-vandanam*, the proper daily ritual to worship the presiding Deities of the three time junctures. The Brahma-gayatri is called the *surya-gayatri* or the *savitri-gayatri* because it refers to Savitur, the sun-god, who controls the three planetary systems (bhur, bhuvah, svah). Although on one level the Brahma-gayatri refers to the sun which is the visible manifestation of Krsna's divine power, it is actually a meditation on Rrsna, the greatest *savitur*, the one and only master of the entire cosmic manifestation. Sri Jiva Gosvami and other Gaudiya *acaryas* have explained that Brahma-gayatri is a meditation on Visnu—the creator, maintainer, and destroyer of the universe, who resides as the worshipable Deity of the sun known as Surya-Narayana.

"The Brahma-gayatri is a verse constituted of sounds. These sounds are non-different from the personality of Gayatri Devi, a consort of Lord Visnu. She is also called Laksmi, Sarasvati, Savitri, and Sandhya. The devotee meditating on the Brahma-gayatri is worshiping Gayatri Devi, and calling her from the sun planet into the heart. By this worship the *sadhaka* receives her mercy and help in approaching Lord Visnu.

"Visnu is residing in the sun planet, and also in the heart as the object of meditation in the Gayatri *mantra*. The Brahma-gayatri removes lust and purifies the mind. Through the mercy of the Lord's energy the *sadhaka* is able to penetrate ignorance and realize Visnu. The Brahma-gayatri denotes Visnu as the Supreme Lord, and the individual *ji'vas* as the eternal servants of the Lord.

"The Brahma-gayatri is non-different from the Lord's energy; it is the sound embodiment of His potency or *sakti*. The *mantra* is a meditation on the Supreme Lord in His functional aspect as the Lord of all energies, and as the creator, maintainer, and destroyer of the universe. The syllable "*gaya*" means to reveal, and "*tri*" means the essence of the three *Vedas*. Gayatri is that verse which reveals the Supreme Lord Visnu." (HBV)

The sounds of the Brahma-gayatri are non-different from the personality of Gayatri-devi, the divine consort and energy of Lord Visnu. Gayatri-devi is also called Laksmi, Sarasvati, Sandhya, and Savitri. After purification by *acamana* and *dhyana*, the chanter calls Gayatri-devi from the sun planet into one's heart through meditation on the Brahma-gayatri, which is a form of worshiping Gayatri-devi. With her mercy one can approach Visnu. The three daily *sandhyas* (juncture of night and day, midday, and day and night) are the time representations of Gayatri-devi. Therefore, Gayatri-devi is worshiped by chanting the Brahma-gayatri at these precise times.

Gayatri is so called because it sings (*gayati*) or illuminates the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and protects (*trayate*) the chanter by fixing his mind on the Lord. Although Gayatri Devi is usually referred to as the "mother of the *Vedas*," In the *Sri Radha-sahasra-nama stotra*, Narada Muni says: *gayatri vedamdtd ca*—"Sri Radha is the Gayatri *mantra* and the mother of the *Vedas*." (*Narada-pancaratra*)

Manifesting only in the material world, the Brahma-gayatri elevates the conditioned soul to the *brahma-bhutah* platform of purification. The Gopala-mantra and the Kama-gayatri, however, are eternally vibrating in the spiritual sky. Most *brahmanas* only chant the Brahma-gayatri, but

Gaudiya Vaisnava *brahmanas* also chant the Kama-gayatri. Lord Brahma heard both the Brahma-gayatri and the Kama-gayatri as the Gayatri mantra, and spoke both of them. The Brahma-gayatri is compared to a green mango. Upon realizing its full meaning, the Brahma-gayatri appears as the Kama-gayatri or a ripe mango. Of course, unless one has *brahminical* qualities and receives the *mantra* by the ritual of initiation from a bona fide spiritual master, the *mantra* will not work or bring any result. The realization and ultimate destination achieved by chanting a *mantra* depends solely on the conception of the chanter. This point is confirmed in the *Gopala-tapani Upanisad*:

"Men of transcendental wisdom know it for certain that the *kama-bija-mantra*, *klim*, and the monosyllable Orh are one and the same. One who goes to Mathura Puri and meditates on Gopala, by uttering either *klim* or Om, attains the ultimate destination of the soul after giving up the present material body." (GU v. 59)

Traditionally women are not allowed to chant Vedic *mantras* (those coming from the *Srutis*). The Brahma-gayatri appears in the *Rg Veda*, one of the original *Srutis*. Nor are they permitted to wear the *upavita* or attend *gurukula*. But women are allowed to chant *thepancaratrika mantras* and Gayatri (e.g. Gopala-mantra, Kama-gayatri), since there are no such restrictions *Go.pancara.tnka mantras*.

Since *sastric* tradition prohibits giving Brahma-gayatri to women, why did Srila Prabhupada award it to qualified female disciples? Some *acaryas* claim that although chanting the Brahma-gayatri creates the beneficial effect of softening the hearts of men, it acts the opposite way with women. They say a woman's heart, which is soft by nature, will become hard by chanting the Brahma-gayatri. Seeing that everyone in the west had hard hearts, however, Srila Prabhupada gave Brahma-gayatri to both men and women so they could soften their hearts, and then offer their tender love to Kisora-Kisori.

"*TheAgni Parana* considers the Gayatri to be concerned with the Lord alone, Who is held therein to be the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe. *TheAgni Purana* states, 'It is called 'Gayatri' since it sings (*gayati*), or reveals Vedic texts, scriptures, the divine light, and the vital forces. It is called Savitri, the (daughter of the sun, since it has the power of enlightening or illuminating the intelligence. And since speech represents the essence of the sun, it is also called Sarasvati.' " (TS)

Origin of Brahma-gayatri

"When Krsna began to play on His flute, that sweet sound vibration entered into the ear of Brahma as the Vedic *mantra* Om. Composed of three letters—A, U, and M, Om describes our relationship with the Supreme Lord (*sambandha*), the activities by which we can achieve the highest perfection of love (*abhidheya*), and the actual position of love on the spiritual platform (*prayojana*). When the sound vibration of Krsna's flute was expressed through the mouth of Brahma, it became Gayatri. Thus being influenced by the sound vibration of Krsna's flute, Brahma, the first living entity of this material world, was initiated as a *brahmana*.

"Srila Jiva Gosvami confirms that Brahma was initiated as a *brahmana* by the flute of Krsna. When Brahma was enlightened by the Gayatri *mantra* through Krsna's flute, he attained all Vedic knowledge. Acknowledging the benediction offered to him by Krsna, he became the original spiritual master of all living entities." (TLC ch. 31)

Meaning of Om

The first *mantra* is *pranava* Om. The *Vedas* glorify Om as the origin of the *Vedas* and as the source of the whole creation. For this reason, Om precedes every Vedic *mantra*. Om expands into the *vyahrtis* (bhuh, bhuvah, svah) which indicate the whole expanse of the creation: the earth and lower planetary systems, the region of the sky, and the upper planetary systems. The *vyahrtis* then expand into the Brahma-gayatri *mantra*. The Gayatri then expands into all the *Vedas*.

The *pranava* Om, the *vyahrtis*, and the Brahma-gayatri combined together are the essence of the *Vedas*, and the most powerful of *mantras*. Chanting these *mantras* has remained the cornerstone of spiritual upliftment in Vedic culture since time immemorial. Om, the sacred syllable of assent, is a seed *mantra* mentioned throughout the Vedic literatures and chanted by all varieties of transcendentalists. It has also worked its way into many languages to indicate God. In English, all-important descriptions of God have "Om" as its root. Om enters the English language as the prefix omni. Therefore words like omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient are valid descriptions of God and, all begin with the root Om. Christians end prayers with Amen meaning Om, and Muslims say Amin, denoting God.

"In every breath man utters and repeats it unintentionally and inevitably. Every vibration in the body and in the universe emerges from Om. A child cries "Om! Om!" The ocean roars "Om! Om!" The bees buzz "Om! Om!" The musician hums "Om! Om!" Om is the expression of the seer of the Truth. Om is *Veda*, the wisdom of God. Om is the *ndda*, the sound of God. Om is eternal, the indestructible word." (GHM)

Despite the apparent universality of the word Om, only Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and the Gaudiya Vaisnavas have revealed the full spiritual significance of Om. In the *Bhagavad-gita*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Krsna says, *pranavah sarva vedesu*: "I am the syllable Om mentioned in all the *Vedas*" Besides indicating the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Om is nondifferent from the sound of Krsna's flute. Unfortunately, most people today have an impersonal conception of the sacred syllable Om.

Sixty-years ago, a popular Western mystic impersonalist named Mr. Leadbeater described his meditation on Brahma-gayatri: "The great shaft of light which immediately pours down upon and into the chanter comes as though from the physical sun—in whatever direction the sun may happen to be. The effect is especially curious when the sun is still below the horizon (at night or dawn). For then the shaft of light comes up at once through the earth. This shaft of light is white with a slight tinge of gold. After it has filled the soul of the chanter, it promptly shoots out from him again in several great rays of spectral colors."

Srila Prabhupada said that Om means Sri Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. "The sound of Om in the beginning of every Vedic hymn addresses the Supreme Lord. Because the impersonalists are very much afraid of addressing the Supreme Lord Krsna by His innumerable names, they prefer to vibrate the transcendental sound *orhkara*. But they do not realize that *omkara* is the sound representation of Krsna. The jurisdiction of Krsna consciousness extends everywhere, and one who Krsna consciousness is blessed." (BG 7.8 p.)

"Om is the alphabetical representation of Krsna. This representation of Krsna, however, is impersonal. It is like Krsna's bodily luster or His *brahman* effulgence. Impersonalists like to

chant Om, but we wish to chant Kṛṣṇa's feature of pastimes because His personal feature is the ultimate understanding. Om is the symbol of eternity (*sat*), but there is no bliss (*anandd*) and knowledge (*cif*). *Om tat sat*: *tat* means the Absolute Truth, and *sat* means eternity. So *om tat sat* means, 'Oh, the Absolute Truth is eternal.' " (SPL 17/3/68)

Due to the widespread influence of impersonal philosophies, most people believe the goal of meditation on Om is to give up one's individual identity and merge with the Supreme Brahman. Or as Mr. Leadbetter would have us believe, "To have our souls filled with a shaft of white light."

The *Upanisads*, however, and realized Gaudiya Vaisnava *acaryas* like Sri Jiva Gosvami reveal that Om, besides indicating the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, also includes His personal energies or *saktis* in the form of His divine pleasure potency, Srimati Rādhikā, and His eternal servants, the *jīva-sakti* or individual souls. "Om is a combination of the letters, A, U, M. The letter 'A' refers to Kṛṣṇa; 'U' refers to Rādhā; 'M' refers to the *jīva* soul." (GVV)

"The Gosvamis declare that (*pranava*) *omkara* is the complete representation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They have analyzed *omkara* in terms of its alphabetical constituents as follows: *Om* is a combination of the letters A, U, and M. *A-kḍrenocyate kṛṣṇah*: the letter A (*a-kḍra*) refers to Kṛṣṇa, Who is *sarva-lokaika-ndyakah*, the master of all living entities and planets both material and spiritual. *Ndyaka* means "leader." He is the supreme leader (*nityo nityandm cetanas cetandndm*). The letter U (*u-kḍra*) indicates Srimati Rādhārāṇī, the pleasure potency of Kṛṣṇa, and M (*ma-kḍrd*) denotes the living entities (*jīvas*). Thus Om is the complete combination of Kṛṣṇa, His potency and His eternal servitors.

"In other words, *omkara* represents Kṛṣṇa, His name, fame, pastimes, entourage, expansions, devotees, potencies and everything else pertaining to Him. As Caitanya Mahāprabhu states in the present verse of *Sri Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *sarva-visva-dhḍma*: '*Om* is the resting place of everything, just as Kṛṣṇa is the resting place of everything (*brahmano hi pratisthahamy* " (Cc. *Adi* 7.128 p.)

In reality the divine syllable Om has nothing to do with an impersonal conception. The following verses from *Gopāla-tapani Upaniṣad* clearly establish that Om means the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Kṛṣṇa. "The sound vibration Om denotes the *catur-vyūha-tattva* of Sankarsana (Sri Balarama), Pradyumna, Aniruddha, and Vasudeva (Sri Kṛṣṇa). As Om transcends the three qualities of material nature, one should also know oneself to be beyond the identity of the material body: T am the eternal servitor of Kṛṣṇa.' This consciousness must be maintained at all times.

"The letter A' denotes Balarama, the son of Rohini, who is the substratum of the entire universe; 'U' denotes Pradyumna, who is the Supersoul of the universe; 'M' denotes Aniruddha, who is the Supersoul of each individual being in the universe. The dot above the M denotes Sri Kṛṣṇa, the fountainhead of all Viṣṇu incarnations." (GU)

Besides supporting Sri Jiva Gosvami's explanation that Om represents Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the *Gopāla-tapani Upaniṣad* further states that the seed of Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes is inherent in the seed *mantra* Om. "The enlightened sages declare that the *svārūpa-sakti* of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa, Sri Rādhā, being the prime *mūla-prakṛti*, is nondifferent from Om. Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, who

is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the universe, is also nondifferent from Om." (GU v. 58)

Acaryas also explain that in the seed word Om which is a combination of three syllables, A-U-M. A—expresses the form of Lord Visnu; U—expresses the form of His consort Sri, the mother and support of the entire world; M—expresses the individual soul, who is the dependent servant of Visnu and Sri and no one else.

"The meaning of the sound vibration *omkara* is present in the Gayatri *mantra*. The same is elaborately explained in the four *slokas* of *Srimad Bhagavatam* known as *catuh-sloki*. The sound vibration *omkara* is the root of Vedic knowledge. This *omkara* is known as *maha-vakya*, or the supreme sound. Whatever meaning is in that supreme sound *omkara* is further understood in the Gayatri *mantra*." (Cc. *Madhya* 25.97)

Meaning of the Vyahrtis—Bhur, Bhuvah, Svah

The *vyahrtis* were made at the beginning of creation and represent the seven planetary systems including Bhur, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, and Satyalokas. Besides denoting the seven worlds, the *vyahrtis* denote the seven planes of consciousness. The *mantras* are prayers directed to the elemental forces on the seven planes. These elemental forces are manifestations of the Parabrahman itself.

The seven worlds are embodied in the trinity of *bhur*, *bhuvah*, and *svah*. *Bhur* or *bhu* represents earth or the physical plane. *Bhuvah* represents the sky or astral plane. *Svah* represents heaven or the mental plane. *Maharloka* represents a higher plane. *Janah* represents the place of birth, a still higher plane. *Tapah* represents the mansion of the Blessed, an even higher plane. *Satyam* represents the abode of truth, the highest plane. It is sometimes said that these *vyahrtis* (*bhur*, *bhuvah*, *svah*) which appear in the beginning of the Brahma-gayatri represent the *sapta rsis* (seven great sages) including Visvamitra, Jamadagni, Bharadvaja, Gautama, Atri, Vasistha, and Kasyapa. The seven *devatas* of this *mantra* (*bhur*, *bhuvah*, and *svah*) are Agni, Vayu, Aditya, Brhaspati, Varuna, Indra, and Visva Devata.

Besides referring to the upper, middle and lower planets (i.e. the complete universe or creation), *bhur*, *bhuvah*, *svah* signify the material body. Sripada Madhvacarya says Om means Lord Visnu, the reservoir of all virtues; *bhu*—the perfection of qualities; *bhuvah*—all power; *svah*—to His blissful nature. It is also said, "Thou art the *bhuh*—creator of all beings; *bhuvah*—the sustainer of all beings; *svah*—the final goal of all beings." *Bhur*, *bhuvah*, and *svah* indicate the totality of all levels of existence in the universe, which is the effect of the Supreme cause, the original cause of everything.

Meaning of Tat

The word *tat* in the Brahma-gayatri denotes the Parabrahma.

Meaning of Savitur

"In the Gayatri *mantra*, we chant *om bhur bhuvah svah tat savitur varenyam*. Above the Bhuloka planetary system is Bhuvarka and above that is Svargaloka, the heavenly planetary

system. Savita, the sun god, controls all these planetary systems. **By** chanting the Gayatri mantra just after rising early in the morning, one worships the sun god." (SB 5.1.31 p.)

"Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura comments on this: *surya dtmd dtmatvenopdsyah*, 'The actual life and soul of all living entities within this universe is the sun. He is therefore *updsya*, worshipable.' We worship the sun god by chanting the Gayatri *mantra* (*om bhur bhuvah svah tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhlmah*). Surya is the life and soul of this universe, and there are innumerable universes for which a sun-god is the life and soul, just as the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the life and soul of the entire creation." (SB 5.20.46 p.)

"As the sun arises, one should chant the Vedic *mantra* beginning with the Gayatri. The sun is the symbolic representation of the eyes of the Supreme Lord." (SB 5.8.19 p.)

"The predominating Deity within the sun is Hiranmaya, Lord Narayana. He is worshiped by the Gayatri *mantra*. He is also worshiped by other hymns mentioned in the *Rg Veda*, for instance: *dhyeyah sadd savitr-mandala-madhyavart*. Within the sun, Lord Narayana is situated, and He has a golden hue." (SB 5.7.13 p.)

"Savita may refer to the sun planet, but actually Savita dwells in the sun planet. The sun is destructible, but Lord Visnu who is also known as Savita is not. One can see Lord Savita only by pure meditation and spiritual vision. Lord Visnu is located in the sun planet, in the heart, and in Vaikuntha. By the mercy of the Brahma-gayatri a *sadhaka* may gain this vision of Lord Visnu. Savita also means that person who stimulates or inspires; the original cause of all beings and things. In other words, Savita denotes the Supreme Lord Visnu, and the word *savitr* means the energy of the Lord or Laksmi-devi, who reveals or gives Savita (Lord Visnu)." (HBV)

"Savitr is a god identified with the sun personified as a goddess, 'the mother of the *Vedas*.'" (AP)

"*Savitur* means Lord Visnu, who is *visvatma*, the soul of the world." (GVV) "When the sun is mentioned as the object of worship in the Gayatri, the sun should not be viewed as an independent entity, but rather as indicating the Paramatma. Saunaka Rsi confirms this in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* 12.11.28: *vyuham suryatmano hareh*, 'The Supreme Personality of Godhead Hari resides there as the presiding Deity of the sun.'" (TS)

The *sastras* conclude that Brahma-gayatri is not merely a meditation on the sun or the impersonal *brahman*, but rather a meditation on the Supreme Personality of Godhead Hari, Lord Visnu, and His consort Laksmi, or the Paramatma. The following illumination by Ramananda Raya, Lalita-sakhi's merciful Kali-yuga form for preaching *Radha-Govindapremadharma*, elevates one's meditation on Brahma-gayatri to the merciful lotus feet of Rasaraja-Mahabhava, Srīman Mahāprabhu. These oceans of mercy, enshrined in the hearts of *the premi sadhakas*, are forever guiding them in the eternal loving service of Radha-Madhava in Vraja-dhama. May we always serve and meditate upon them.

Ramananda Raya said, "The Supersoul within everyone's heart speaks not externally but from within. He instructs the devotees in all respects, and that is His way of instruction." (Cc. *Madhya* 8.266)

"Here Sri Ramananda Raya admits that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is the Supersoul. It is the Supersoul that inspires the devotee; therefore He is the original source of the Gayatri *mantra*. Savitar is the original source of all intelligence. That Savitar is Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu." (Cc. *Madhya* 8.266 p.)

Gayatri is generally thought of as means to improve chanting, but it can also *mean sankirtana*. "Gayatri, the song for deliverance, also means *sankirtana*. *Kirtana* is also sung, and it also elevates us towards the highest goal. The *sankirtana* of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu also reinstates us in our highest serving position. So Brahma-gayatri in connection with Mahaprabhu comes to mean *krsna-kirtana*. Then it reaches Vrndavana and the flute *kirtana*.

"Upon entering Vrndavana, the sweet sound of Krsna's flute is heard engaging all His servitors in their respective duties. At night when the *gopis* hear that sweet flute melody, they run to the Yamuna, thinking, 'Oh, Krsna is there.' When Yasoda hears the song of Krsna's flute, she thinks, 'My son will be home soon.' In this way the sound of the flute engages and inspires all the servants of Lord Krsna." (SE)

Meaning of Varenyam

Varenyam—(a qualifying word for the word *bhargo*) means praiseworthy, worshipable, or the best among all personalities who should be sought out or chosen by all people. In other words, among choices **He** is the best choice. *Varenyam* means Lord Visnu, the ultimate and the shelter for all. Not only is He above all the luminescent objects in this universe, but His divine effulgence is the very source of all illumination in creation.

Meaning of Bhargo

The word *bhargo* means brilliant, full of life and energy. It signifies the independent, self-effulgent source. "*Bhargo* means self-illuminated light that is always fully pure, beyond the material world, and eternally conscious. *Bhargo* also refers to *brahma* which means beyond material contamination, full of all power and knowledge." (GVV) *Bhargo* means divine essence. It represents the supreme light, the essence of Para Brahman.

The Brahma-gayatri, however, does not indicate sun worship, which is material, but rather worship of the ultimate, spiritual source of all light and life. "That 'light' (*bhargo*) mentioned in the Gayatri is the supreme *brahman*, for the word *bhargo* indicates the light of consciousness. That light is Lord Visnu, the source of the origin, preservation, and dissolution of the universe." (AP),

"The 'light' mentioned in the Gayatri does not refer to that which dwells in the physical sun alone, for the word *varenya* ('most excellent') indicates that its application extends as far as the majesty of *isvara*. The light is simply *fhejyoti* or effulgence of the Supreme Lord. Therefore it is stated in *the Agni Purana*, 'Through meditation, the *purusa* (Supreme Personality of Godhead) can be seen dwelling in the disc of the sun.' "(TS)

Bhargo refers to Lord Visnu who is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of this world. It comes from the root *bha* which means to shine, and *bhrasja* which means to cook or ripen. He is the best of all luminaries who even illuminates the sun and moon. "Placing Lord Visnu, the

most adored (*yarenyam*) of all existences, in the middle of the sun's aura, I should meditate upon Him."

"We meditate on that worshipable light of the Savita Devata, the sun-god or the Supersoul, which incites our *buddhi*. Or, we meditate on the venerable luminous orb (*bhargah*) of the Divine Sun, who directs all our activities." (AP)

In the word *bhargo*—*bha* means brilliant; *ra* means Rati, the consort of Cupid or blissful pastimes; *ga* means full of knowledge. Combining these definitions leads one to the brilliant, golden form of Srimati Radharani, the eternal divine consort of Kamadeva Krsna, the master of Cupid. Sri Radhika, the abode of unlimited transcendental knowledge, is always absorbed in blissful pastimes with Her Priyatama Syama.

Meaning of Devasya

Devasya refers to a personality who is divine, glowing, and transcendental to the dull material world. In other words, *devasya* denotes the Supreme Personality of Godhead Visnu or Sri Krsna.

Meaning of Dhimahi

"The word *dhimahi* means to obtain, or to meditate. It comes from the root *dhi*—to hold. *Dhimahi* means, 'I meditate upon that supreme illuminating power to get liberated and attain Him.' " (GVV) "The word *dhimahi* means to understand our activity in relationship to the Lord; namely fixing our minds on Him. (AP)

Meaning of Dhiyo yo nah

"In the phrase *dhiyoyo nah*, the word *nah* means that our *buddhi* (intelligence) inspires us to do good work. Lord Visnu is inspiring every living entity. By His divine inspiration *thejiva* goes to hell or heaven." (GVV)

Meaning of Pracodayat

"*Pracodayat* means, 'May Lord Visnu inspire, and impel us forward. He is the independent one who should bless us and guide us on the correct path of action in the world; to act only for His pleasure.' " (AP)

Meaning of Brahma-gayatri Mantra

"Let me meditate on that worshipable effulgence of the divine, sun who enthuses our meditation."

The purpose of chanting the Brahma-gayatri is to realize the all-powerful, omniscient Lord and to act with that realization in daily life, in full Krsna consciousness. The *mantra* denotes Lord Visnu as the Supreme Lord, transcendental to the material creation and the individual *jiva* as the eternal servant of the Lord.

Meanings:

1) "May that essence of Lord Visnu, manifest as the sun, lead my mind to dwell on His divine self in all acts and undertakings, and at all times." (AP)

2) "We meditate upon the venerable radiance of the divine sun, the shining creator. May He impel our *buddhi* (spiritual intellect or higher intuition)."

3) "Let us meditate (*dhimahi*) upon the Parambrahma (*tat*), who is the cause of all causes, (om), and the destroyer of all existence in the universe (*bhur, bhuvah, svah*). As the independent source of all energy and life (*bhargo*). He is the shining (*devasya*) Supersoul of the sun (*savitur*). Let us use our intelligence (*pracodayat*) to reach the transcendental world." (HBV)

4) "One should meditate upon Lord Narayana (Suya Narayana), bedecked with earrings, *diadem* crown, armlets, and bearing conch, disc, lotus, and club in His four hands, sitting on a lotus throne in the middle of the sun planet."

5) "May the Gayatri Devata (Laksmi Narayana, the presiding Deity of the Brahma-gayatri) who fulfills one's desires, help us know the eternal Lord who is understood only through the scriptures. May Gayatri, the mother of all the *Vedas*, reveal this eternal truth to us."

6) "The origin of the energy of this material world comes from Krsna in the form of Radha. All the energy making up the three worlds is simply a transformation of Her energy."

The following explanation of the Brahma-gayatri perfectly summarizes all the conceptions presented thus far. Indeed, it is one of the most extraordinary elucidations ever given in the history of Gaudiya Vaisnavism. Repeated study and meditation upon this entry will place one in the benign effulgence of Sri Radha's divine lotus feet.

7) "*Bhur* represents the sensual, physical world, Bhu-loka, where we are—the world of our experience. *Bhuvah* represents the subtle mental sphere, the mental world of acceptance and rejection—'I like this, I don't like that.' *Svah* (Svargaloka) is the plane of intelligence where reason and discrimination dictate decisions. Hence, these three words of the Brahma-gayatri *mantra* represent the three planes of material existence: physical, mental, and intellectual. *Bhur* is the gross physical world of the body and senses; *bhuvah* is the mental world; *svah* is the intellectual world.

"*Tat* summarizes and reduces these three planes of experience to one entity "that." The word *tat* means that, and it indicates that which is shown by the *savitur*, sun, or the individual soul.

"*Savitur* means the sun or that which illuminates or reveals. The three planes of material existence are shown to us by the sun, which actually means the soul. It is not actually the sun that enables us to see gross things; rather we see and perceive with the help of the soul. The center of existence for an individual living entity is not the sun, but the soul that illuminates the body with consciousness and perception. For it is the soul who gives light to this world, and provides understanding of our environment. Without the soul there is no perception. Although generally the word *savitur* means "sun," it can only refer to the soul, which like the sun shows us everything.

"The word *varenyam* means worshipable, venerable, and it indicates the area of the Supersoul which is to be worshiped by the soul.

"In general, the word *bhargo* means light. Just as an x-ray machine can show us what the ordinary eye cannot see, *bhargo* is *svarupa-sakti*—a higher more powerful light that can reveal the soul. Krsna's *svarupa-sakti*, personal internal energy, is a combination of His *samvit-sakti* (cognition potency) and *hiadini-sakti* (bliss potency).

"*Bhargo* can also be substituted with the word *bhanu* which means sun or "who shows us by light." Radharani is also known as Vrsabhanunandini, the daughter of King Vrsa "Bhanu" who, like Her father, was a devout worshiper of the sun god. Srimati Radharani is the very essence of Krsna's *svarupa-sakti*. Just as rays of light extend from the sun, the whole internal potency is an extension of Mahabhava Srimati Radhika. She has developed Herself into such a beautiful area of brilliance, of internal energy, and thereby She serves Her beloved Lord.

"Who does this *bhargo*, *svarupa-sakti* or personal internal energy, belong to? It belongs to *deva* (*devasya*) which means "who is beautiful and playful." The word *devasya* then signifies Sri Krsna, the personified perfection of beauty and pastimes combined.

"The word *dhimahi* means "meditate." *Dhi* is derived from the word *buddhi*, which means that which we cultivate with the help of our intelligence. But here, *dhi* points to that venerable intelligence which descends into this plane to help us cultivate devotional service. Therefore, *dhimahi* does not mean abstract meditation, but it indicates the loving service of Radha and Krsna in Vrndavana.

"In summary, the flute song of Sri Krsna, expressed as the Brahma-gayatri, is engaging us in the service of Vrsabhanunandini, Sri Radha. The Gayatri *mantra* will incite us and inspire us to surrender to Srimati Radhika, accept Her order, and engage in Her eternal loving service. In other words, the divine service of the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani is the ultimate meaning of the Brahma-gayatri." (SE, adapted)

With thoughts like these and implicit faith in the spiritual efficacy of the Brahma-gayatri the worshiper should approach the Lord with this "prayer of prayers." Only then will the heart be truly attuned to receive the divine wisdom. The blissful thoughts thus aroused will permeate through the heart, purge one of all sins, and enable one to know God and love Him. One will become free from ignorance, the illusion of *may a*, and the cycle of birth and death.

Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana

veda'sdstra kahe, 'sambandha' 'abhidheya' 'prayojana,' , 'krsna,' prdpya sambandha, 'bhakti' prdptyera sddhana.

"The Vedic literatures give information about the living entity's eternal relationship with Krsna, which is called *sambandha*. The living entity's understanding of this relationship and acting accordingly is called *abhidheya*. Returning home, back to Godhead, is the ultimate goal of life and is called *prayojana*.

,^ abhidheya'ndma 'bhakti' 'prema' prayojana purusdrtha'siromani prema mahd'dhana

"Devotional service, or sense activity for the satisfaction of the Lord, is called *abhidheya* because it can develop one's original love of Godhead, which is the goal of life. This goal is the living entity's topmost interest and greatest wealth. Thus one attains the platform of transcendental loving service unto the Lord.

krsna--mddhurya--sevdnanda-prdptira kdrana krsna'sevd kare, dra krsna'rasa'dsvddana

"When one attains the transcendental bliss of an intimate relationship with Krsna, he renders service to Him and tastes the mellows of Krsna consciousness." (Cc. *Madhya* 20.125-7)

The *Vedas*, *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Omkdra*, and Gayatri can all be analyzed in terms of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*.

Mahaprabhu and His followers also explained the Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy referring to these three steps to perfection. "Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu continued, 'The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the central point of all relationships (*sambandha*), acting in devotional service to Him is one's real occupation (*abhidheya*), and the attainment of love of Godhead is the ultimate goal of life (*abhidheya*). These three subject matters are described in the Vedic literature.' " (Cc. *Madhya* 6.178) In one sense, all activities can be understood by applying these three concepts,

The word *sambandha* means the basis, binding, beginning, definition, connection, foundation, or the constitutional relationship between God, the individual soul, and the material world. The living entities are eternally and inseparably connected to Krsna, the true object of relationship. The general relationship between the living entities and Krsna is one of servant and the served. In the perfectional stage of devotion, however, one becomes established in a specific relationship with Krsna either as His servant, friend, parent or lover.

Performing *sadhana-bhakti*, which includes Krsna *nama-sankirtana* and chanting Gayatri, frees one from *may a*, attaches one to God, and places one in a service relationship with Krsna, the beautiful Personality of Godhead.

Abhidheya is the means to an end, activity, exchange, interaction, or *sadhana-bhakti* (the spiritual practices one pursues upon becoming conscious of his original relationship with God). *Abhidheya* is the means of attaining the *summum bonum* or the desirable object. In other words, pure unalloyed devotional service is the means to realize the eternal loving relationship that exists between the Supreme Lord Krsna and the minute *jiva* soul.

Prayojana is the ultimate goal, final point, conclusion, necessity, or the object of the activity in *abhidheya*. *Krsna-prema* is the ultimate end and goal of all actions in devotional service.

These three aspects of Gaudiya Vaisnava *siddhanta* are contained in different sections of the Gayatri *mantras* (Brahma, Guru, Gaura, Kama and the Gopala-mantra). For a *mantra* to be categorized as a Gayatri *mantra* it must have the words *vidmahe*, *dhimahi*, and *pracodayat* which represent the three concepts of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana* respectively. The Sanskrit word *vidmahe* means to know, attain, understand, surrender to, or to realize. It refers to the first stage (*sambandha*) wherein one understands or acknowledges his original relationship with the Supreme Lord. In the Guru-gayatri, for example, *vidmahe* means to know or realize one's relationship as the eternal servant of his spiritual master. In the Brahma-gayatri the word *varenyam* takes the place of *vidmahe*. Although Gopala-mantra is not a Gayatri, the concepts of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *sambandha* are represented by the words *Krsnaya*, *Govindaya*, and *Gopijanavallabhaya*, which manifest their unlimited mercy to| sincere *sadhakas* as the Deities of Madan-mohana, Govindaji,' and Gopinatha.

Abhidheya, the stage of serving and worshiping the Lord in order to attain *Krsna-prema*, is represented by the word *dhimahi*, which means to hold, obtain, meditate, to think over, or

contemplate for the purpose of gaining knowledge. *Dhimahi* means, "Now I understand or have some knowledge about my eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa (Guru or Gaura), so let me surrender fully and meditate deeply upon Him. By this meditation I will advance in *bhakti* and attain the perfect goal of *Kṛṣṇa-prema*." In the Guru-gayatri, for example, the *sadhaka* meditates on his *guru* as *Kṛṣṇanandaya*, which means "one who fills the Lord with bliss by his service."

In the beginning stage of meditating on Guru-gayatri, a *sadhaka* may see that his *guru* is pleasing Kṛṣṇa only by his outer service of preaching, writing, and spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Progressing in meditation, a surrendered *sadhaka* may realize a deeper meaning of his *gurudeva* as *Kṛṣṇanandaya*. On the perfectional level one will see *gurudeva* in his *manjari svarupa* pleasing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa during Their *nikunja-līla*.

*nikunja'yuno rati'keli'siddhyai, yd ydlibhir yuktir apeksarayd
tatrdti'ddksydd ati'vallabhasya, vande guroh sn-cara'ndravindam*

Prayojana (goal, result) is the third and final stage of *Kṛṣṇa-prema* denoted by the -word *pracodayat*, which means to enthuse, drive, inspire, impel, or force one to do the right thing. Because of the awakening of attraction, attachment, and love, a devotee is spontaneously and forcefully drawn to Kṛṣṇa.

Mantras	Sambandha	Abhidheya	Prayojana
Brahma-gayatri	<i>tat savitur varenyam</i>	<i>bharso devasya dhimahi</i>	<i>dhiyoyonah pracodayat</i>
Guru-gayatri	<i>guntdevaya vidmahe</i>	<i>kṛṣṇananday a dhimahi</i>	<i>tan no euroh pracodayat</i>
Gaura-gayatri	<i>caitanyaya vidmahe</i>	<i>visvambhara ya dhimahi</i>	<i>tan no gaurah pracodayat</i>
Gopala-mantra	<i>kṛṣṇaya</i>	<i>govindaya</i>	<i>gopijanavallab haya</i>
Kama-gayatri	<i>kamadevaya vidmahe</i>	<i>puspabanaya dhimahi</i>	<i>tan no'nangah pracodayat</i>

These three aspects of Gaudiya Vaisnava *siddhanta* are contained in different sections of the Gayatri *mantras* (Brahma, Guru, Gaura, Kama and the Gopala-mantra. See above Chart).

Benefits of Chanting Brahma-gayatri

"Gayatri is supplementary to the *Vedas*. It is the giver of bliss. Merely reciting Gayatri destroys heaps of sins; reciting it ten times removes the sins committed from birth; reciting one-hundred times destroys the sins of the previous life; reciting one-thousand times destroys the sins of the past three lives." (*Yajñavalkya Samhita*)

"Upon placing Gayatri *mantra* and the *Vedas* on a scale, Lord Brahma found them to be of equal weight." (PP)

"Markendeya Rsi said, 'By chanting Gayatri one can achieve either material gain or liberation. The worshiper who is devoid of desires, however, attains the supreme abode of Lord Visnu.' " (*Visnudharmottara Purana*)

Chanting the Brahma-gayatri with the Gaudiya Vaisnava conception quickly brings one to the *brahma-bhuta* platform of service to Radha and Krsna. Chanting *diksa mantras* nourishes one's relationship with Krsna. *Mantras* control, purify, and free the mind from material attachments and elevate one to the spiritual world. One should never neglect his *mantras*. The following story illustrates the unlimited power of *mantra*.

Once a disciple asked his *guru*, who was a famous *siddha* saint, of Vrndavana, "Gurudeva, how long after receiving the *diksa mantra* did you attain *siddhi*?" "Immediately!" he replied. Immediately after receiving the *diksa mantra* he went into *samadhi* for eight hours. During *samadhi* he saw his spiritual form as a *manjari* carrying flowers for decorating Radhika's hair. Such amazing effects are certainly possible for one who chants the *mantras* with absolute faith and surrender.

"One can develop loving devotional intelligence by perfectly chanting the Brahma-gayatri *mantra* awarded at the moment of *brahmana* initiation. By clear intelligence, one becomes naturally and spontaneously disinterested in the rewards offered by mental speculation and fruitive activities, and takes full shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (SB 11.16.44 p.)

*sandhyopdstyadi-karmdni
vedendcoditdni me pujdm uah kalpayet samyak'
sankalpah karma'-pdvanim*

"Fixing the mind on Me, one should worship Me by his various prescribed duties, such as chanting the Gayatri *mantra* at the three junctures of the day. Such performances are enjoined by the *Vedas*, and purify the worshiper of reactions to fruitive activities " (SB 11.27.12)
"If one takes shelter of the sound representation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (*pmkara*), he can realize his constitutional identity and engage in devotional service even though in conditional life." (Cc. *Madhya* 6.174 p.)

Brahma-gayatri and Srimad Bhagavatam

The *Vedas* state that originally the *pranava omkara* or Om expanded into the Gayatri *mantra*. Then the Gayatri *mantra* expanded into the *catuh-sloki* of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, and these four verses expanded into the form of the full *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

The relationship between the Gayatri *mantra* and the *Srimad Bhagavatam* is described in various *Puranas*. Traditional Vedic scholars claim that Gayatri is meant for worshiping the sun god or the impersonal *brahman*. The great commentator Srila Sridhara Swami also discusses the relationship between the *Bhagavata* and the Gayatri in his comments on verse I.I.I: "By opening the *Bhagavata* with the word *dhimahi* from the Gayatri, this *Purana* is shown to be of the nature of *brahmavidya*, known as Gayatri."

Srila Jiva Gosvami, however, establishes that both the Gayatri, which is the essence of the *Vedas*, and the *Srimad Bhagavatam* are meant for worshiping Sri Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the *Sandarbhas*, Srila Jiva Gosvami explains how the *Srimad Bhagavatam* is an explanation of the Gayatri *mantra*, beginning from its first verse to its ending verses like 12.13.19 which both end with the phrase *satyam param dhimahi*.

To qualify as a Gayatri *mantra*, the *mantra* must always have the word "*dhimahi*" in it. Srila Vyasadeva could not directly mention the Gayatri in the *Bhagavatam* because Gayatri is a Vedic *mantra*, only to be chanted by *dvijas* (twice-born *brahmanas*). The *Puranas*, such as the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, however, can be studied by anyone regardless of his social status. Therefore, Vyasadeva put the Gayatri in his own words in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* as seen in the first verse of this matchless *amala Parana*:

om namo bhagavate vdsudevdya
janmady asya yato 'may ad itaratas cdrthesv abhij'nah swardt
tene brahma hrdd ya ddi-kavaye muhyanti yat surayah teJ'o-wri-
mrddam yathd vinimayo yatra tri'sargo 'mrsd
dhdmd svena soda nirasta'kuhakam satyam param dhimahi

"O my Lord, Sri Krsna, son of Vasudeva, O all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. I meditate upon Lord Sri Krsna because He is the Absolute Truth and the primeval cause of all causes of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the manifested universes. He is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations, and He is independent because there is no other cause beyond Him. It is He only who first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmajl, the original living being. By Him even the great sages and demigods are placed into illusion, as one is bewildered by the illusory representations of water seen in fire, or land seen on water. Only because of Him do the material universes, temporarily manifested by the reactions of the three modes of nature, appear factual, although they are unreal. I therefore meditate upon Him;

Lord Sri Krsna, who is eternally existent in the transcendental abode, which is forever free from the illusory representations of the material world. I meditate upon Him, for He is the Absolute Truth." (SB I.I.I.)

In *Tattva-sandarbha*, Sri Jiva Gosvami explains the direct connection between Gayatri and the *Bhagavatam*. In the first verse of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the phrase *janmady asya yatah* refers to the Gayatri word *savituh*, which like the word *janma* means to "give birth." It denotes the appearance, maintenance and destruction of the material world. The phrase *tene brahma hrda* refers to the Gayatri word *pracadayat*, which means to inspire. Indeed, Krsna did just that by entering the heart of Lord Brahma. As Krsna entered the heart of Brahmaji and inspired him to create, similarly, through the medium of the Gayatri *mantra* Krsna acts as the Supersoul within all *brahmanas* to inspire the workings of the intelligence so that they can understand God and surrender unto Him.

The phrase *visargo 'mrsa* means the three types of creation, namely *om bhur, bhuvah, svah* which is the first line of the Gayatri *mantra*. The word *svarat* (self-luminous, self-effulgent) compares with the Gayatri word *devasya*, which comes from the word *devudyotame* (to shine, to be effulgent). The *Bhagavatam* word *param* and *varenyam* mean the best, the supreme and

foremost. The *Bhagavatam* word *satyam* and *bhargah* mean effulgent, maintainer, or that which exists.

As in the Gayatri *mantra*, the first verse of the *Bhagavatam* ends with the word *dhimahi*. The word *dhimahi* is plural which signifies that the *Srimad Bhagavatam* is meant for everyone. It is not limited like the *Vedas* that are only accessible to the *dvijas*. Vyasadeva clearly defines the Brahma-gayatri in the opening verse of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Throughout the rest of the book Vyasadeva reveals that Gayatri is a meditation on Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and Srimati Radhika, His eternal consort. Both the Gayatri *mantra* and the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, which is based on the Gayatri, explain love of God as the highest principle of religion.

"Srila Vyasadeva gives the reader a chance to gradually develop in spiritual realization before actually relishing the essence of the pastimes of the Lord. Thus Vyasadeva purposefully invokes the Gayatri *mantra*: *dhimahi*. This Gayatri *mantra* is especially meant for spiritually advanced people. When one attains success in chanting Gayatri *mantra*, he will understand the transcendental position of the Lord. First, however, one must acquire the *brahminical* qualities and become perfectly situated in the mode of goodness in order to chant the *mantra* successfully. From that point one begins to realize the transcendental name, fame, form, and qualities of the Lord.

"*Srimad Bhagavatam* is a narration dealing with the *svarupa* (form) of the Lord, which is manifested by His internal potency;

This potency is distinguished from the external potency, which has manifested the cosmic world of experience. Srila Vyasadeva makes a clear distinction between the internal and external potencies in the very first verse of the First Chapter of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. He says that the internal potency is factual reality, whereas the external energy, manifested in the form of material existence, is temporary and illusory, no more real than a mirage in the desert." (TLC ch. 23)

"The meaning of the *Vedanta-sutra* is present in *Srimad Bhagavatam*. The full purport of the *Mahabharata* is also there;

The commentary of the Brahma-gayatri is also there and fully expanded with all Vedic knowledge. *Srimad Bhagavatam* is the supreme *Purana*, and it was compiled by the Supreme Personality;

of Godhead in His incarnation as Vyasadeva. There are twelve cantos, 335 chapters and eighteen thousand verses." (*Garuda Purana*)

Brahma-gayatri and Hare Krsna Maha-mantra

*krsna'mantrahcdte hdbe samsdra'mocam krsna'ndma haite pdbe
krsnera carana*

"Simply by chanting the holy name of Krsna one can obtain freedom from material existence. Indeed, simply by chanting the Hare Krsna *mantra* one will be able to see the lotus feet of the Lord." (*Cc. Adi 7.73*)

The Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* is perfect, independent, and completely pure. It requires no *samskaras* or initiation process to be effective. Anyone can chant this *mantra* whether he is qualified or not. There is unlimited power in the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*. Even without a *guru*, initiation, *sadhu sanga* or anything else one could still attain *Krsna-prema* by chanting Hare Krsna. By staunch faith in God, *sadhu-sanga*, and purity of heart acquired in a previous life, a person can attain *Krsna-prema* just by sitting down and chanting Hare Krsna. However, such an individual may be one out of a million. Generally, due to ignorance, *aparadhas*, *anarthas*, mental impurity, and severe lack of faith one needs training, encouragement, and association with an advanced devotee to attain perfection in chanting the Hare Krsna *mantra*.

The initiation process involved in taking the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* means that one accepts the shelter of a bona fide spiritual master. Receiving the *guru's* mercy, the disciple is guided safely and quickly on the path of spiritual perfection. Gaurkisorā dasa Babaji said one can realize his *svarupa* just by chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*.

"The Gayatri *mantra* or Om liberates one from repeated birth and death in this world; but the holy name of Krsna gives one shelter at the lotus feet of Krsna." (Cc. *Adi* 7.73)

"The conditioned souls are engaged in a struggle for existence (*manah sasthanindriyani prakrti-sthāni karsati*). Deliverance from this struggle constitutes the highest benefit, but without receiving a *mantra* from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, deliverance is impossible. The beginning *mantra* is the Gayatri *mantra*. After achieving purity and qualification, one becomes a *brahmana* (*dvija*), and is offered the Gayatri *mantra*. Simply by chanting the Gayatri *mantra*, one can be delivered. Usually only *brahmanas* and demigods are allowed to chant this *mantra*. In Kali-yuga, everyone is in a very difficult position. Only a powerful *mantra* can deliver one from the dangers of this age. Therefore the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in His incarnation as Lord Caitanya, gives us the Hare Krsna *mantra*." (SB 8.6.15 p.)

"The whole thing is that Sridhara Svami is giving stress very strongly that you can simply chant Hare Krsna *mantra* without undergoing any ritualistic ceremonies. Madhavendra Puri has composed a nice verse wherein he says, 'My dear Gayatri *mantra*, I offer you my respects, but no more I can chant the Gayatri *mantra*.' Taking bath early in the morning is a good recommendation for spiritual advancement. But Madhavendra Puri also said, 'Now I am unable to execute this order. Please excuse me.' In this way he has described in many ways. At last he concludes that, 'I shall sit down somewhere underneath a tree, and simply remember Govinda's name. That is sufficient. Yes.' He says, 'Please excuse me, please excuse me. Please excuse me.'" (SPT 18/2/71)

The *sastras* repeatedly stress the incredible power of chanting Krsna's holy names. *Harinama*, even without *diksa*, or any preliminary rites of purification immediately produces results as soon as it contacts the tongue, "The Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* is so amazingly powerful that it gives fruit as soon as it touches the tongue. This *mantra* removes great sins that cannot be destroyed by *yajna*, *tapa*, *dana*, or other means. It is freely available and can be chanted by anyone, anywhere, at any time. Unlike other *mantras*, the chanting of the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* does not depend upon *diksa*, proper behavior, or rituals of purification." (*Padyavali* 29)

Despite the astonishing potency of *harinama*, according to Sri Jiva Gosvami, one must still follow *mahajanas* like Narada Muni who first took *diksa* and then worshiped their beloved

Deities. Without accepting *mantra diksa* from a spiritual master one cannot awaken his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead as a servant, friend and so on. Only Sri Guru can establish one's eternal relationship with Krsna. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, His followers, and all of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas down to the present day have honored this tradition. Besides chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*. Lord Caitanya, Lord Nityananda and Sri Advaita Acarya all took *mantra diksa* from a bona fide spiritual master. To remain on the path of *vaidhi-sadhana* one needs only the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*. In order to progress on the platform of *raga-marga* and eventually serve Krsna's eternal *vraja-lilas* one must receive *diksa mantras* such as the Kama-bija, Gopala-mantra and Kama-gayatri. The *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* explains that these *mantras* are absolutely necessary for internal worship through meditation and for external worship of the *arca-vigraha* of Radha-Krsna.

The Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* is the *namatmika*, the very life of the Brahma-gayatri, Gopala-mantra, and Kama-gayatri. The holy name of Krsna is the original *mantra* vibrating in the spiritual world of Goloka Vrndavana. These *mantras* (Gopala-mantra, Kama-gayatri) and other Vedic *mantras* have life because different names of Krsna are within them. Sripada Madhvacharya explained that the Vedic *mantras* used in demigod worship have potency because they contain secondary names of Krsna (*gauna-nama*).

In reality, *mantras* like *om namo sivaya* and others which are used to petition various demigods are indirectly glorifying Krsna. The word *sivaya* for example means "all-auspicious." Indeed, everything about the Supreme Lord Krsna is completely auspicious. Besides that, it is Sri Krsna alone who invests the demigods with their marvelous powers. True followers of *dam vamasrama* become connected with Krsna if they chant the Vedic *mantras* with the understanding that they are actually Krsna's secondary names. But *smarta brahmanas* only see the demigods in the *mantras*, so they only attain the demigods.

Of all *mantras*, Krsna's holy name is the most important. Sri Jiva Gosvami says Gayatri-mantra has value because it contains Krsna's names within it. Being full and complete (*nitya mukto, pumo suddho*), the holy name can give everything required. The Gayatri *mantra*, however, is accepted to improve one's worship of the holy name. The material world is a perverted reflection of the pure spiritual realm. In the spiritual world the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* is at the top, but it becomes reflected in the material world as the *mantra* Om. The *mantra* Om is seen throughout the *Vedas*, and the other Gayatri *mantras* are found in the *Smrtis*. Then later in subsequent Vedic literatures the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* becomes manifest. Because of the *maha-mantra's* seeming obscurity, the *smarta brahmanas* do not consider chanting Hare Krsna as important as chanting the *Vedas* and the Gayatri *mantras*. In reality, however, chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* is the very essence of all the *Vedas*.

Om emanates from Krsna's flute and manifests first as Gayatri, then as the *Vedas*, the *Vedanta-sutras*, and finally as the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. In its beginning, middle and end the *Srimad Bhagavatam* stresses the efficacy of chanting Krsna's holy names. Indeed, the concluding *sloka* of Srila Vyasadeva's great treatise recommends chanting Krsna's holy names.

nama-sankirtanam'yasya, sarva'pdpa'prandsanam, prandmo duhkha-samanas, tarn namdmi harim param

"The congregational chanting of Krsna's holy name destroy all sinful reactions. Offering obeisances to Lord Hari removes all material miseries, therefore I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord Hari." (SB 12.13.23)

The Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*, which is a *yugala-mantra* of Radha and Krsna, expands from Vrndavana as the Kama-gayatri. It becomes the Brahma-gayatri upon crossing the Viraja River. Upon entering the material world the *cit-sakti*, spiritual potency, of this *mantra* takes the form of a seed *mantra*. Then it manifests as Om, which expands into *bhur, bhuvah, svah*. Again returning to the spiritual world, *bhur, bhuvah, svah* expand into the Brahma-gayatri, which expands into the *purusu-sukta*. The *purusa-sukta* expands into the *mantras* of the four *Vedas* (*Rg, Atharva, Sama, Yajur*). Then the *Vedas* expand into the *Agamas* that contain the *Pancaratrika* writings in 108 different books describing various *pancaratrika mantras* like the Gopala-mantra and Kama-gayatri.

"If by chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* one can attain love of Godhead, then one might ask what is the necessity for taking *diksa*. Even though the chanting of the holy name is •sufficient to enable one to progress in spiritual life to the standard of love of God, one is nonetheless susceptible to contamination because of possessing a material body. Consequently, special stress is given to *arcana-vidhi* which helps to purify the body and mind." (SB 7.5.23-24 p.)

Is the effect of chanting the Gayatri *mantra* the same or different from chanting the *maha-mantra*? It is the same. Gayatri means that which delivers one from material entanglement. Besides offering liberation, the Gayatri *mantras* chanted by the Gaudiya Vaisnavas specifically award love of God. Therefore, they have the same effect as chanting Hare Krsna. The *kama-bija kllm* alone can give *Radha-Krsna prema*, and that of course is the perfection of chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*.

But if chanting Hare Krsna is the eternal function of the soul, and the *maha-mantra* is sufficient to give us *Krsna-prema*, then why bother with *diksa mantras*? Vedic *mantras* and *pancaratrika mantras* are only necessary for the conditioned souls. If one were already on the *brahma-bhutam* (transcendental) platform, then he could easily get all perfection just by chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*.

One who is purely situated on the *bhagavata-marga* has no material attachments or regard for laws, society, friendship or love. But for one who is still on the bodily level of "I and mine," and who needs to relate to others on the external platform of society and religiosity, further purification is needed to elevate him to the transcendental platform. Therefore by following the rules of the Vedic and *pancaratrika margas* and by receiving the necessary *diksa mantras* one can gradually become purified, detached, and eligible to exist perfectly on the *bhagavata-marga* of pure loving service to Radha and Krsna.

"To chant the holy name of the Lord, one need not depend upon other paraphernalia, for one can immediately get all the desired results of connecting or linking with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It may therefore be questioned why there is a necessity for initiation or further spiritual activities in devotional service for one who engages in the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. The answer is that although it is correct that one who fully engages in chanting the holy name need not depend upon the process of initiation, generally a devotee is addicted to many abominable material habits due to material contamination from his previous

life. In order to get quick relief from all these contaminations, it is required that one engage in the worship of the Lord in the temple. The worship of the Deity in the temple is essential to reduce one's restlessness due to the contaminations of conditioned life.

"Thus Narada, in his *pancaratriki-vidhi*, and other great sages have sometimes stressed that since every conditioned soul has a bodily concept of life aimed at sense enjoyment, to restrict this sense enjoyment the rules and regulations for worshipping the Deity in the temple are essential. Srila Rupa Gosvami has described that the holy name of the Lord can be chanted by liberated souls, but almost all the souls we have to initiate are conditioned. It is advised that one chant the holy name of the Lord without offenses and according to the regulative principles, yet due to their past bad habits they violate these rules and regulations. Thus the regulative principles for worship of the Deity are also simultaneously essential." (Cc.Adi 7.77 p.)

The Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*, the *diksa mantras*, and the process of worshipping the Deity of Krsna work together to help one quickly attain perfection. As a conditioned soul begins to chant Hare Krsna he becomes cleansed of material contamination and elevated to the platform of goodness. Having attained some internal and external purity, one begins to manifest *brahminical* qualities. Thus receiving *diksa* and the appropriate Gayatri *mantras*, he continues chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* along with worshipping the Deity form of the Lord and associating with advanced devotees. By these practices one eventually rises to the transcendental platform of *visuddha-sattva*, pure goodness. In other words, the fruit of chanting Hare Krsna is self-purification and attaining the shelter of a bona fide *guru*. The *guru* then instructs one in Krsna consciousness and gives *diksa*. After taking *diksa* the fruit of the disciple's *nama sankirtana* will be *Krsna-prema*.

"Even though born in a *brahmana* family, one cannot engage in Vedic rituals without being initiated and having a sacred thread. Although born in a *brahmana* family, one becomes a *brahmana* after initiation and the sacred thread ceremony. Unless one is initiated as a *brahmana* he cannot worship the holy name properly." (Cc. *Madhya* 15.108 p.)

The *diksa mantras* give us purity and support and keep us from falling down. The function of the *diksa guru* is complete and successful when the disciple realizes his *svarupa* or attains *svarupa-siddhi*. But the *siksa* aspect of receiving orders and instructions continues to *vastu-siddhi* and beyond. Although the principal *sadhana* is chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*. Lord Caitanya Himself accepted a ten-syllable Gopala- mantra from His spiritual master Isvara Puri. This clearly shows the importance of *pancaratrika* initiation into Vaisnava *mantras*. Receiving Vedic and *pancaratrika mantras* such as Brahma-gayatri, Gopala-mantra, and Kama-gayatri enhances a devotee's purification, stills the restless mind, and enables one to worship the Deities. Thus chanting Krsna's holy names and receiving *pancaratrika mantras*, from a bona fide spiritual master are fundamental to the Gaudiya Sampradaya.

Both Gayatri and the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* are the same truth because they contain holy names of the Lord. One part of the same truth is called *nama* (Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*), and the other part is called *mantra* (Gopala-mantra). After obtaining the *maha-mantra* one is obliged to receive *mantra* initiation. By chanting Brahma-gayatri one understands that he is not the body, and becomes liberated from the material conception of life. The chanting of Hare Krsna, however, takes one to the spiritual world and gives *prema*, provided *diksa* has been duly accepted from a bona fide spiritual master.

The Gayatri *mantra* raises one to the stage of liberation and, then retires. Kṛṣṇa's holy name continues after liberation and helps one attain ecstatic *Kṛṣṇa-prema*. The Brahma-gayatri contains the sacred syllable Om, which is compared to a seed, whereas Gopala-nama is the juicy fruit of *nectareanprema*. The taste of chewing the seed of chanting Om cannot compare to the taste of the sweet fruit of chanting *Kṛṣṇa-nama*.

What is the relationship between *nama-sankirtana* and *dikṣa mantras* like Gopala-mantra and Kama-gayatri? The Gopala-mantra and the Kama-gayatri are *mantras* leading to perfection. Chanting these *mantras* alone, as did the sages of Dandakaranya, can bring one to the precincts of Goloka. By chanting Gopala-mantra, Kama-gayatri, and Gaura-gayatri one attains *sambandha-jnana* and loses his attachment for sense enjoyment. Then the *sadhaka* will feel a particular loving mellow (*rasa*) rising within, and finally his eternal *svarupa* will manifest. After this stage everything else will be revealed by *suddha-nama*. The *dikṣa mantras* enable the *sadhaka* to chant *suddha-nama*, the pure name of Kṛṣṇa.

The Dandakaranya sages performed *sadhana* of chanting the Gopala-mantra. This *mantra* established their relationship (*sambandha-jnana*) with the Lord, and gradually revealed a permanent devotional mellow (*sthayi-bhava*) in *madhurya-rasa*. Thus they achieved *svarupa-siddhi*, the perfectional limit of this world. Next they were reborn as *gopis* to serve Kṛṣṇa in His Bhauma Vrndavana pastimes. At this point of perfection there is no need of chanting the Gopala-mantra, Kama-gayatri, or any other *dikṣa mantras*. The refinement of one's transcendental identity and service will be done by hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and by associating with Kṛṣṇa and His eternal servants like Lalita-sakhi and Sri Rupa-manjari.

Dikṣa mantras such as the Gaura-gayatri, Gopala-mantra, and Kama-gayatri are necessary in the stage of *sadhana* because they purify one's chanting of *harinama* and establish one's eternal loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa. *Nama-sankirtana*, however, is the best practice both in *sadhana* and in perfection. Liberated souls will no longer chant *dikṣa mantras*, but they will forever rejoice in the ambrosial nectar of *nama-sankirtana*.

In *Raga-vartma Candrika*, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has clearly stated that those who chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, without first having *dikṣa* from a Vaisnava *guru*, will not attain the Supreme Lord. Their chanting, however, will protect them from entering hell. Then in the next birth they will obtain *sadhu-sanga*, take *dikṣa*, and eventually reach the Supreme Lord.

The *sastras* and the exemplary lives of the previous *acaryas* show the need for receiving *mantras* such as the Gopala-mantra and Kama-gayatri in order to advance steadily in pure consciousness and attain the perfection of *Kṛṣṇa-prema*. The *Narada-pancaratra*, *Yajnavalkya-samhita*, and *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu* stress the absolute need for all *sadhakas* to receive *dikṣa* from a bona fide spiritual master. Sri Rupa Gosvami mentions surrendering to and taking *dikṣa* from a spiritual master (*gurupdddsrayastasmāt Kṛṣṇadikṣddi-sikṣanam*) as the first two of the sixty-four essential limbs (*angas*) of *sadhana-bhakti*.

All the eternal associates of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu have followed this process of taking *dikṣa* and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa along with various *dikṣa mantras*. Even Srila Haridasa Thakura, though crowned the *namācārya*, took *dikṣa* from Sri Advaita Acārya according to *Advaita Prakash*. The duty of the spiritual master is purify and deliver his disciples to *prema-dhama* Sri Vrndavana by giving them appropriate *mantras*, mercy and spiritual instructions (*dikṣa* and *sikṣa*). It has been a Gaudiya Sampradaya *guru-siṣya* tradition for a disciple to receive *dikṣa*

mantras after waiting for one year at most. Currently, however, Gaudiya *acaryas* give *diksa* within a week or a month. It is standard among *many guru* descendants of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura to give Guru and Gaura-gayatris and the potent Gopala-mantra along with *harinama*.

Although not in accordance with tradition, today there are some *gurus* who accept disciples but do not give them any *diksa mantras* even after eight or nine years. Srila Prabhupada's standard in ISKCON was to give *diksa* after six months or one year at most. *Gurus* should be liberal and compassionate towards their disciples by giving as much mercy as possible to help them progress on the path of *prema-bhakti*.

Following the predecessor *acaryas* means upholding the Gaudiya tradition of overflowing magnanimity and compassion. Appreciating the tremendous power of the various *diksa mantras* passed down through the benevolent preceptorial line, the present *acaryas* should find the ways and means to give out the mercy quickly to eager and deserving disciples. Srila Prabhupada's standard should be the example and the inspiration. "Anyone who has a slight tendency to become a devotee should be given a chance." (Srila Prabhupada, tape 27/12/69)

Prabhupada Gayatri Stories

Initiation: "In a very clear, soft, steady voice, Srila Prabhupada began to teach me the Gayatri *mantra*. Then he took the sacred thread and put it around my neck and across my shoulder, very gracefully and with such precision in his movements. 'Now,' he said, 'you are a *brahmana*.' " (Riktananda Dasa)

Srila Prabhupada's chanting: "After bathing, dressing, and applying *tilaka* Prabhupada would silently recite the Gayatri *mantra*. Holding his *brahmana's* thread, and looping it around his thumb, he would sit erect, silently moving his lips." (*Prabhupada Lilamrita* vol.2)

When did Srila Prabhupada chant Gayatri? "Usually Prabhupada would chant Gayatri immediately after bathing. In "the morning just before sunrise Prabhupada would finish translating, wash his face, apply fresh *tilaka*, and chant Gayatri. Then he would go for a morning walk. His noon Gayatri would be chanted at about one-fifteen after bathing, dressing in fresh cloth, and applying *tilaka*. He would chant his evening Gayatri sometime after taking *darsana* of Radha-Madhava. I would often chant Gayatri with Srila Prabhupada. He would sit in his *darsana* room or on a seat, keep his eyes open, and chant his Gayatri in about four or five minutes." (HSI)

Srila Prabhupada Gayatri Stories: "Once a devotee named Sahadeva, who had previously used drugs, reentered Prabhupada's room right after receiving *brahminical* initiation. When Prabhupada asked him why he was returning and interrupting, Sahadeva replied, 'O Srila Prabhupada, I forgot my bead bag.' After he left the room Prabhupada turned to me and said, 'This is a *brahmana*!'

"In Melbourne in 1976, Srila Prabhupada gave Gayatri initiation to several disciples. Pusta Krsna Swami, Prabhupada's secretary, decided to speed up the initiations by putting the *brahmana* threads over the shoulders of the new initiates before letting them in Prabhupada's room to receive the Gayatri *mantra*. When Srila Prabhupada saw this he was upset and said,

'Who put the sacred thread on your shoulder?' He called Pusta Krsna and said, 'I do this, not you. I put on the sacred thread, not you!'

"Once in India at a *pandal* program the microphone kept slipping off the broken stand and disturbing Srila Prabhupada's *Bhagavatam* lecture. Seeing this, Prabhupada told a disciple to remove his *brahmana* thread and use it to tie the microphone securely to the stand." (HSI)

In ordinary circumstances such use of a *brahmana* thread would be considered highly improper. Although unorthodox, Prabhupada's using a *brahmana* thread to assist his *Bhagavatam* lecture is certainly not offensive. Rather his transcendental ingenuity indicates that he was an expert judge of time and circumstance. Indeed, using a *brahmana* thread to make an arrangement to spread the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the very purpose and essence of the Gayatri *mantra*, which is represented by the *brahmana* thread. Moreover, by this action Prabhupada teaches that the *pancaratrika marga* is always subservient and subordinate to the *bhagavata-vidhi*. In all cases the *pancaratrika vidhi* functions to serve and assist the *bhagavata-vidhi*, or the path of direct glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Krsna. Srila Prabhupada *kijai!*

"Once in Bombay, Tamal Krsna Goswami lost the key to Srila Prabhupada's *elmira*, and Prabhupada became very upset over his negligence. Upon finding the key, Tamal tied it on his *brahmana* thread, and showed it to Srila Prabhupada to assure him that he would never lose the key again. Srila Prabhupada looked at Tamal Krsna and nodded his approval. So from this example at least, it appears Srila Prabhupada did not object to devotees tying keys on their *brahmana* threads." (HSI)

Is it proper? The ISKCON practice of securing keys on the *brahmin* thread can be observed among Vrndavana *goswamis*, *Pun pandas*, Gaudiya *sannyasis*, Varanasi *brahmins*, *pukka* South Indian *pujaris*, and a few Mayapur *ricksaw wallas* too. It seems *brahmanas* worldwide have adopted this practical custom.

Chapter Three

UPAVITA AND RULES OF CHANTING

The Sacred Thread

At the time of Gayatri initiation the disciple is awarded the sacred thread. Wearing the sacred thread, technically called the *upavita*, *yajnopavita* or *brahmasutra*, is an integral part of *upanayanam*. Lord Visnu is also known as Yajna. Since all sacrificial rites are dedicated to Lord Visnu, they are called *yajnas*. The word *upavitam* means "that which surrounds." The thread that surrounds Lord Visnu is therefore called *yajnopavita*. Upon receiving *upanayanam* a person wears a sacred thread, *upavita*, which when draped over his shoulder, surrounds Lord Visnu residing in his heart. The word *yajnopavita* also means, "thread of sacrifice" because it symbolizes sacrificing the ego for the service of God.

At the time of initiation the *guru* blesses the disciple with the sacred thread while chanting the *mantra*:

*om yajnopavitam paramam pavitram, •~ prajdpater yat sahajam
purastdt.
ayusyam agryam praamunca subhram, yajnopavitam balam astu tejah.*

"This sacred thread is supremely pure. The progenitors have blessed this thread. By wearing the *yajnopavita* one attains longevity, spiritual power, radiance and divine illumination."

Why is the thread also called *brahmasutra*? The sacred thread, which has three strands (*sutras*) knotted together, symbolizes the combination of three entities—*cit*, the individual soul; *acit*, the material body; *isvara*, the Supreme Lord as the Supersoul and indwelling witness. The three strands also denote using the three functions of thinking, speaking, and acting only for spiritual purposes. The main knot is known as *brahmagranthi*, the knot of Brahma. This knot protects the body from disease and evil vibrations. The *upavita* is given to men upon receiving the Vedic Gayatri *mantra*. It signifies that he has accepted a *gum* and is eligible to study the *Vedas*. It is the symbol of purity. It reminds the *sadhaka* of his responsibility to meditate in order to maintain that purity.

According to tradition, a *brahmacari* wears one set of three strands; *agrhashta* adds an extra set of three for his wife (total six threads); a *vanaprastha* wears three sets of three threads. Traditionally, *vanaprasthas* would wander in the forest wearing only tree bark. The extra set of three strands substitutes as an upper cloth which is required for chanting Gayatri and doing *puja*. A *brahmacari* who directly takes *sannyasa* may wear one set of four strands to represent the fourth order of spiritual life. According to statements in the *Srutis*, *Smrtis* and *Brahmanas*, if one takes *sannyasa* after going through the *grhashta asrama*, he may wear four sets of three threads (total twelve threads) to signify going through all four *asramas*. The four sets are also said to represent the *devas*, *pitrs*, upper cloth and outer cloth.

In Bengal it is a tradition among *brahmanas* in general, and specifically among *grhashta brahmanas* to wear three sets of three (nine threads); one set for the *devas*, one set for the *pitrs* (forefathers), and one set for the *uttariya* (upper cloth). Srila Prabhupada wore three sets of three, and he was put into *samadhi* with the same number of threads.

Wearing too fat an *upavita* results in a loss of reputation because one is trying to boast and show off that he is a "big *brahmana*." Wearing a sacred thread that is too thin results in a loss of wealth because one is ashamed of openly admitting to be a *brahmana*. It is the mentality behind the choice of threads that counts. The *Vedas* espouse a balanced mentality in wearing the *upavita*. A *brahmana* should be free from false pride and feigned humility. Free from any ulterior motive, he should wear an *upavita* only to engage in the Lord's service.

The *upavita* may be washed during bathing. When shaving or taking oil massage it may be wrapped around the waist. However, the *upavita* should never be removed except when replacing it with a new one. While evacuating the *upavita* should be wrapped two and a half times around the right ear. Why does the *brahmana* thread stay pure when wrapped around the right ear (as is done when passing)? At the time of *brahminical* initiation the seven sacred rivers (Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Sarasvati, Narmada, Sindhu, and Kaveri) enter the right ear

and permanently reside in the ear lobe. Thereafter, by contacting the right ear, the thread remains pure even when the rest of the body becomes impure by the act of evacuation.

"The *upavita* is a sign of those competent to study the *Vedas* from the *acarya*. The spiritual master accepts the sincere inquirer as his disciple and gives him the sacred thread." (SB 1.2.3 p.)

"When the spiritual master brings the disciple nearer to spiritual consciousness, a person is given the *upanayanam*, or the sacred thread. The sacred thread is indication that, 'This man is now under control of the spiritual master for advancing in Krsna consciousness.' This thread ceremony is called *upanayanam*." (SPT 7/7/73)

"So at least we try to give a sacred thread by ceremony. But anyone can purchase a thread from the market, *two-paisa* worth or one-cent worth, and become a *brahmana*. 'You are a *brahmana*?' 'Yes, you see my sacred thread?' Finished. 'What you are doing?' 'Never mind.' Don't be such *brahmanas*, at least in our camp. You must follow the rules and regulations. Don't show that 'I am now doubly initiated, sacred thread.' Don't cheat in that way." (SPT 25/6/76)

How To Make A Brahmana Thread

- 1) "Wrap the thread three times around your knees (or one knee plus one stable object like a heavy pot; preferable to two knees for getting sufficient length of the finished *upavita*) and then hold the two ends between the fingers and thumb of the left hand. Make sure that all the strings have the same length.
- 2) Make a loop with one, leaving about 10-15 cm. extra. Keep all strings taut; keep hold at the place where the loop folds back along the other strings.
- 3) Wrap the other end of the thread perpendicular to the triple threads wrapped around your knee, three times. For each wrap chant silently one time the first line of the Brahma-gayatri.
- 4) Put the end of the string, which you have just wrapped, through the loop. Pull the end that makes the loop, then pull the other end and tighten, making a simple knot.
- 5) Twist both ends of the string in the direction the threads of the strings are turning, making them tight, but not so tight that they double over.
- 6) Put the two string ends together and twist them, this time in the opposite direction from the direction you were just twisting them separately.
- 7) With the two ends make a simple knot about three cm. from the first knot and cut off the excess string.
- 8) Now you can make the second half of the the *upavita* in the same way, taking care not only that it has strings of equal length, but that it is equal in length to the first half. To do this, it is best to keep the first half in the same position as you have made it (around your knees, for example) and wrap the second half on top of the first. By pulling the two halves separately with the same force (before making the first knot in the second half) you will see whether they are equal. If not, make the necessary adjustment on the second half, then tie the first knot.
- 9) Storing the completed *upavita*: Simply fold it in half, looping both ends of the *upavita* around the left forefinger and putting the forefinger of your right hand through the loop made by the fold; twist the folded end in one direction several times, such that it coils around itself; finally, insert the folded end through the loop through which the left forefinger was inserted.
- 10) Offer the *upavita* to the lotus feet of your worshipable Deity before wearing it." (CMD)

Upavita Nectar

"Sri.Jiva Gosvami left Navadvipa for Vrndavana in order to associate with Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana Gosvamis. In the ecstasy of love, Sri Jiva wandered hypnotically, arousing curiosity among the travelers on the road. 'Who is this young man?' they wondered. He must be a prince with a complexion of gold like a *campaka* flower. What a beautiful face! Just see his attractive wide eyes, eyebrows, forehead, nose, ears, and curly hair. See his neck, broad chest, nails, and fingers on his lotus-like hands! How beautiful are his thighs, knees and legs.' They all admired the *tulasi* garland hanging around his neck and the milk white sacred thread lying across his chest." (BR)

"One day while Lord Gauranga was absorbed in *sankirtana*, a *brahmana* came to the house of Srivasa but did not receive permission to enter the house. His cherished desire to see the Lord's *sankirtana* performance being thwarted, he returned home extremely disappointed. One day that *brahmana* met Lord Caitanya on the bank of the Ganges. In a rage, he angrily tore off his sacred thread and cursed Lord Gauranga that His happiness in family life would be destroyed. Hearing the *brahmana's* condemnation, Gaurahari became joyful and returned home after completing His bath. Those who respectfully hear about the Lord being condemned by the *brahmana* are themselves certain of overcoming any condemnation by a *brahmana*." (BR)

"At the sacred thread ceremony of Vamanadeva, the sun-god personally uttered the Gayatri *mantra*, Brhaspati offered the sacred thread, and Kasyapa Muni offered a straw belt." (SB 8.18.15)

"I gaze on Lord Mukunda, who is dressed in handsome golden garments, who has golden decorations and a golden flute, and who wears as a sacred thread a glittering golden *campaka* garland gloriously golden as Sri Radha." (VM)

Meaning of Mantra

"He who cultivates the preliminary devotional activities anxiously keeping in view that realized state of devotion can alone attain to that object of all endeavor. None else can have the same." (BS v. 60 p.)

This important quote from *Brahma-samhita* shows that the eager and conscientious devotee always keeps the goal (*prayojana*) of *Krsna-prema* in his mind and heart. He never loses sight of the meaning of life and sees that meaning in all his words, actions, and meditations. The Gayatri (Guru, Gaura, Kama) and the Gopala-mantra direct one into Vrndavana. According to the Gayatri one chants and his understanding of it, he will enter a specific spiritual planet (Vaikuntha or Vrndavana).

"One day Gopa-kumara's *gurudeva* said. The Gopala-mantra will fulfill all your desires. Because the chanting of this *diksa-mantra* will fulfill all your desires, if you desire to attain Krsna, this *mantra* will also fulfill that desire. Always think of His beautiful Syamasundara form. His transcendental qualities and pastimes. If you do this, this *mantra* will fulfill your desire to get Krsna.' " (*Brhad-Bhagavatamrta*)

"As the devotee meditates on the Lord, so the Lord manifests that form to a devotee. The Lord gives His servants the power to sell Him to others." (CB *Madhya* 23.465)

*tvam bhakti'yoga'paribhdivita'hrt-saroja , asse sruteksita'patho
nanu ndtha pumsdm yad'yad'dhiyd ta urugdya vibhdivayanti tat-
tad'vapuh pranayase sad'anugrahdyā*

"O my Lord, Your devotees can see You through the ears by the process of bona fide hearing, and thus their hearts become cleansed, and You take Your seat there. You are so merciful to Your devotees that You manifest Yourself in the particular eternal form of transcendence in which they always think of You."

"The statement here that the Lord manifests Himself before the devotee in the form in which the devotee likes to worship Him indicates that the Lord becomes subordinate to the desire of the devotee—so much so that He manifests His particular form as the devotee demands. This demand of the devotee is satisfied by the Lord because He is pliable in terms of the transcendental loving service of the devotee. This is also confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.11): *ye yathā mām prapadyante tās tathāiva bhajamy aham.*" (SB 3.9.11 v.&p.)

Besides concentrating on the meaning of the *mantra* and its component words, one must correctly pronounce each word to insure the proper result. In order to concentrate on the meaning of the Gayatri *mantras*, one may break the *mantras* into sections and pause for a moment between sections. For example, the Brahma-gayatri: *Om—svah—varenyam—dhimahi—pracodayat— Om.* There are five breaks given here, with the first after *Om* and the second *aftersvah* and so on. The Gopala-mantra: breaks after *klīh—kṛsnaya—govindaya—gopi-janavallabhaya—svaha—kṛm.* Kama-gayatri breaks after *klīh—vidmahe—dhimahi—pracodayat—klīh.*

These breaks for meditation correspond with the three divisions of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana* described in Chapter Two. The technique is to combine the meaning of the words (*vidmahe*, *dhimahi*, *prayojana*) with their accompanying concepts (*sambandha*, *abhidheya*, *prayojana*) while meditating on each section of the *mantra*. This reflective process will quickly yield results.

"Of course, those who are actually following the rules and regulation of Gayatri *mantra* will gradually come to the spiritual understanding. But not by official chanting. That will not help.

'Because I have got Gayatri *mantra*, oh, *om-burble bura burra...*' (makes sound) Finish. Not like that. Don't cheat yourself. Try to understand." (SPT 26/11/72)

How to Chant Mantras

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says that among sacrifices He is *japayajna*, the sacrifice of chanting /apfl. By the word *japa* Kṛṣṇa is referring to chanting Gayatri and not the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra*. The *Agni Purāṇa* defines *japa* thus: "The syllable "*ja*" destroys the cycle of birth and death, and the syllable "*pa*" destroys all sins (*papa*). *Japa*, therefore, is that which destroys all sins, stops the cycle of birth and death, and liberates the soul from bondage."

There are two forms of *japa*: *Vacika* (oral) and *Manasika* (mental). There are two divisions of *vacika japa*: 1) Silent—repeating the *mantra* while moving the lips but not making any sound. This is called *upadṛśu*. 2) Murmuring—repeating the *mantra* along with movement of the lips and making a slight sound or whisper. *Manasika* (mental or meditative) *japa* is done by

concentrating upon the meaning of each word and the full conception of the whole *mantra* within the mind while not moving the tongue, lips or making any sound.

"*Upamsu japa* is one hundred times better than *oral japa*, and *manasikajapa* is a thousand times greater." (*Manu-samhita*)

Manasika japa is very difficult to perform in this age of anxiety, agitation, and mental impurity. Therefore *acaryas* recommend *vacika japa*, uttering the *mantras* quietly and very clearly, in order to remove ignorance and lethargy from the mind. One should practice *upamsu japa*, silent chanting, to cleanse passion from the mind. Although *manasikajapa* is the most powerful, it is only possible for *sadhakas* who are pure, peaceful, and filled with goodness (*sattva-guna*). According to Hari Sauri Prabhu, Srila Prabhupada did *upamsu japa* while chanting Gayatri. One should choose a chanting method based on his qualification and the order of the spiritual master.

Gayatri *mantras* work and give results only when one exists on the *brahminical* platform of internal and external cleanliness. To chant the Gayatri *mantra* successfully one must acquire the *brahminical* qualities of tranquility, self-control, austerity, and cleanliness (thrice daily bathing and wearing clean cloth). Mental purity achieved by chanting Hare Krsna and performing *bhuta-suddhi* (see prayers mentioned below), and deep concentration on the meaning of the *mantras* are also prerequisites for success in chanting Gayatri.

One should sit perfectly still (no shaking the head or pacing back and forth) with a straight back, because an upright posture keeps the nerves peaceful and aids concentration. Krsna gives the same instruction in the *Bhagavad-gita* verse 6.13: "One should hold one's body, neck and head erect in a straight line and stare steadily at the tip of the nose." Without moving the lips, tongue or showing the teeth, one should close his eyes and chant silently in the mind while deeply absorbing himself in the meaning of each word and the meaning of the complete *mantra*. Regarding the point of not moving the tongue, some *yoga* books claim that concentration is enhanced by holding the tongue firmly against the roof of the mouth while chanting the *mantras* within the mind.

One *yogi* said, "This helps circulate the *prana* by acting as a bridge between the head and the circuit on the front of the body. When doing so your aura automatically becomes brighter. If you add breath control, the aura becomes even brighter. So it would be good for health, mind and spirit." Of course, a program of *yoga* and *pranayama* for health is not the objective, but the principle is to do whatever works to fix the mind on Krsna and never forget Him. If one cannot concentrate while chanting silently in the mind, however, then one may move the lips slightly while inaudibly mouthing the words of the Gayatri.

"When chanting Gayatri *japa* the *sadhaka* should not move his head and neck about, nor show his teeth. He shall sanctify his mind by withdrawing it from the objects of the senses, and by silently meditating upon the meaning of the *mantra*. If the *mantra* remains within the mind, and the mind remains within the *mantra* (in other words—the mind and *mantra* are joined), then the characteristics of Gayatri *japa* are revealed to the chanter. While performing *japa*, the fingers must be kept together and slightly contracted at the base. If the fingers are separated, the effect of the *japa* will leak out through the spaces." (HBV seventeenth *vilasa*)

Even though many physical suggestions are given herein, the mind is the main factor in successful Gayatri chanting. Perfection comes from intense meditation, not sitting postures.

Meditation means deeply concentrating on Krsna who appears in the form of the *mantra* (*mantra-rupa*). The *sadhaka* must focus all his mental and intellectual energy on the *mantra* until it reveals its secrets. Lord Brahma, for example, focused on the Gopala-mantra until it fully bloomed within his consciousness. Meditation is the art of communion with Krsna after searching Him out in the dark core of the heart.

To avoid sleepiness and to attain maximum concentration one can sit in the *siddhasana* or the *padmasana*, which Lord Brahma used while chanting the Gopala-mantra. "Thus while sitting and chanting one may keep his body straight, and this will help one in the chanting process; otherwise one may feel sleepy." (SB 7.15.31 p.)

Padmasana— First sit on the floor on a seat made of *kuska* grass, wool or silk. Hold the right-foot and place it on top of the left thigh with the outer edge of the foot pressed into the groin. Bring the right knee in to face almost forward. Lift the left foot over the right thigh, and bring it into the right groin. Move the feet further up into the groin and bring the knees closer together. Sit straight, extending the trunk up. Open the chest, and move the shoulder blades in. Lift the diaphragm up and relax the face.

If one cannot do *asanas* or sit up straight, then sit against a wall or in a firm chair. One should sit perfectly still, breathe slowly and deeply, keep the mouth closed, and the tongue still. Fixing the mind on Sri Guru, Srīman Mahāprabhu, and the lotus feet of Radha and Krsna or a personal *ista-deva*, begin chanting with total absorption, feeling, and surrender. Meditate deeply on the meaning of each word and on the conception of the whole *mantra*.

"*Japa* refers to the silent chanting of the Deity *mula mantras*, and the Gayatri *mantras* given by the spiritual master. Try to realize that the *mantra* is nondifferent from the Deity being worshiped. Sit properly on an *asana*, perform *acamana*, and cover the right hand with the upper cloth while chanting. The counting of *mantras* chanted with the fingers should not be exposed to view." (PAP)

One will never attain the goal of life by worldly intelligence. By increasing the quality of the chanting, *bhakti* will enter the heart and carry one to the lotus feet of Giridhari. The only purpose of chanting these *mantras* is to develop pure love for Krsna. Chanting Gayatri is a powerful form of meditation that yields great results when done with sincerity and seriousness. Even *premāyā* Srimati Radharāṇī performs intense meditation upon Her beloved after offering prayers to Her *ista-deva*.

"If it is not false when people say, "Gandharvika and Giridhari are eternally one soul," then please O Giridhari! In order to make this half of our soul happy, kindly appear now right here before My eyes!"

"Praying thus, Srimati Radhika then closed Her eyes, and began to meditate upon the beloved of Her soul, Sri Giridhari. Shutting off all the activities of Her senses just like a *yogini*, Radhika sat motionless while totally fixed in an unbreakable condition of silence." (PS)

All Vaisnavas who take initiation (*mantra-diksa*) are duty bound to chant the Gayatri *mantra* purely without offense thrice daily for their entire lives. The very word *gayatri* means to chant (*gaya*) three (*tri*) times daily. Such daily performance of religious rites at scheduled periods of the day is called *ahnika*. The *mantras* given by the *guru* are the Brahma-gayatri, Guru-mantra,

Guru-gayatri, Gaura-mantra, Gaura-gayatri, Gopala-mantra, Kama-gayatri, Panca-tattva *mantra*, and *harinama*. Conceiving these'^ *mantras* to be the form of Bhagavan, chant them with great faith,¹ love and affection. These *mantras* are not ordinary. They are completely transcendental and full of unlimited spiritual power.'

Before chanting one should bathe, apply *tilaka*, dress properly, tie the *sikha*, and select a suitable place for chanting. Gayatri should be chanted in a quiet, sanctified and peaceful place, ideally in view of the temple Deities or one's personal Deity. One can only imagine how peaceful Vrndavana must have been five hundred years ago during the time of Sri Rupa and Sanatana Gosvami. Still the Gosvamis chose the most secluded places to concentrate on their chanting and *lila smarana*. In Gokula, Srila¹ Sanatana Gosvami did *bhajana* in a cave fifteen feet underground. Raghava Gosvami stayed in a cave at Govardhana, and in' Unchagoan, Narayana Bhatta Gosvami had a *bhajana kutira* twenty feet underground. These *acaryas* show the importance of a "distraction free environment" for proper concentration in *bhajana*.

In *Harinama-cintamani*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that inattention or distraction to other things is the main cause of offenses in chanting *Krsna-nama*. This principle also applies to chanting Gayatri. In the present day, devotees wear earplugs or sound headphones to block out distracting noises while chanting Gayatri. Using such devices to create a quiet, distraction free environment will definitely improve the quality of one's chanting. If one tries this technique he will realize the inner meaning of the phrase "silence is golden."

In most cases, it will not be possible to chant the morning Gayatri before the temple Deities because they are not giving *darsana* at this time. One should always face the Deity when chanting. If not chanting before a Deity, the *sastras* recommend facing east during the morning and noon *sandhyas*, and north in the evening. Sitting beside or standing waist deep in a sacred river such as the Yamuna or Ganga, beside the ocean or on a mountaintop are also auspicious places.

"Chanting Gayatri on one's personal *asana* yields one time the benefit; chanting outside yields 1,000 times the benefit; chanting in a river yields 100,000 times the benefit; chanting in front of the Deities gives unlimited benefit." (*Linga Purana*)

"Gayatri *japa* done in a *tulasi* garden, in *agoshalla*, on a temple grounds, or in the presence of the *guru* very easily controls the mind, brings perfection and spiritual joy." (*Tantrasara*)

One should not chant Gayatri in a moving vehicle, on a bed, or with one's back to a temple, fire, *peepul* tree, or a body of water. After selecting the proper time and place, one should sanctify the mind and consciousness by performing *acamana* and by chanting and meditating upon the meaning of the following prayers. -

Bhuta Suddhi Prayers

1) *ndham vipro na ca nara'patir ndpi vaisyo na sudro ndham vami na ca grha'paar no vana'stho yatir vd kintu prodyan nikhila-paramdnanda'purndmrtdbdher gopi'bhartuh pada-kamalayor ddsa'ddsduddsa*
(*Pady avail* 63)

"I am not a *brahmana*, *ksatriya*, *vaisya* or *sudra*. I am not a *brahmacari*, *grhastha*, *vanaprastha* or *sannyasi*. What am I? I am the eternal servant of the servant of the servant of Sri Krsna, the master of the *gopis*."

2) "By nature I am Krsna's eternal servant. But by misfortune I have been inimical toward Krsna from time immemorial. Thus identifying with my temporary material body, I have been continuously rotating in the cycle *ofsamsara*, suffering the threefold miseries of material existence. Now by the causeless mercy of my beloved spiritual master I fully realize that I am Krsna's eternal servant. I am an individual spiritual being, completely separate from my gross and subtle body. By the mercy of my Spiritual master I have obtained the good fortune of serving him, and assisting him in his eternal service to the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Gandharvika-Giridhari in the blissful, spiritual realm of Goloka Vrndavana."

Although it is not necessary to wrap or hold the *upavita* (sacred thread) while chanting Gayatri *mantras*, Gaudiya Vaisnavas traditionally wrap the *upavita* two and half times around the right thumb, cover the hands with the upper cloth, and chant the *mantras* silently. While chanting do not engage in other activities Such as talking, looking here and there, shaking the head, pacing back and forth, yawning, dozing, scratching, or touching the nose. Distraction means inattention; inattention means offense, and offenses block the path to *prema*.

The most important factor in successful chanting is the type of conception and sentiment behind the chanting of the *mantras*. Mayavadis also chant Hare Krsna and the Gayatri *mantras*. According to Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, however, the mayavadis chanting of Hare Krsna will vanish in the *brahmajyoti*. Their chanting is as painful as thunderbolts cast on Krsna's body.

The best mode of chanting the Brahma-gayatri is *manasika*, silently in the mind. "Without moving the lips or tongue, shaking the head or neck, or showing the teeth, meditate on the syllables of the *mantra*, the meaning of each word, and the meaning of the whole *mantra*. Without knowing its meaning, one will not attain the goal intended by chanting that *mantra*." (*Yajnavalkya-smṛti*)

To help one chant the *mantra* perfectly various rituals have been introduced to purify the mind and increase concentration. These rituals include *acamana*, *pranayama*, *sankalpa*, *dhyana*, *arghya*, and so on. Chanting the Gayatri *mantra* along with the performance of the rituals is called *sandhya vandana*. Although *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* explains the importance of performing *sandhya vandana*, it also says if one can chant the *mantra* offenselessly, he can discard the accompanying rituals. The most important point is to chant the *mantra* with rapt attention, fully concentrating on the meaning of each word and the meaning of the complete *mantra*.

In *mantra* one of *Manah Siksa*, Srila Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami prays to his mind, "O my dear brother, my foolish mind. I humbly pray to you with sweet words. Please give up all pride and quickly develop sublime and incessant *rati* for your *diksa-mantras*." This verse enjoins that *sadhakas* should regularly chant their Gayatri *mantras* with attachment and devotion as instructed by their Gurudeva.

Mantra Siddhi

There is no restriction regarding the number of times one can chant Gayatri or the Gopala-mantra. Vedic scriptures suggest chanting the Gayatri *mantra* 108 times, thirty-two times, or

twenty" eight times. Some *gurus* prescribe ten times, others twelve, and some Gaudiya *acaryas* request their disciples to chant one round of the Gopala-mantra at each *sandhya*. The main point is to chant the number of times requested by the spiritual master, and chant more if time permits. In this regard, Srila Prabhupada once said we should chant a minimum of sixteen rounds on *ihejapa* beads and unlimited rounds off the beads. *Kirtaniya sada harih*.

According to *mantra sastras*, *mantra-siddhi* (perfection in a particular Vedic or *pancaratrika mantra*) can be attained by chanting it one thousand times the number of syllables in the *mantra*. For example, you can attain perfection in the eighteen-syllable Gopala-mantra by chanting it 18,000 times; the twenty-four syllable Kama-gayatri, by chanting it 24,000 times, and so on. The Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*, however, is independent of this concept, for even one pure recitation of Hare Krsna can give the highest perfection of pure love of God.

What does it mean to attain *mantra-siddhi*? It means one gets perfection in that particular *mantra*, and quickly receives the benefits or fruits of that *mantra*. Generally, *siddhi* means obtaining whatever the *mantra* offers. For example, Hanuman *mantra-siddhi* gives *darsana* of Hanuman and benedictions such as strength. The *Brahmanda Purana* provides another example of *mantra-siddhi*: "Reciting the *Nrsimha Kavaca* 32,000 times with a purified heart grants the most auspicious of all auspicious things. Material enjoyment and liberation are understood to be already available to such a person."

Lord Brahma himself achieved *mantra-siddhi* after chanting the Gopala-mantra thousands of times. He attained the perfection of hearing Krsna's transcendental flute. Then in his trance of meditation, Brahma saw Lord Govinda and the spiritual world of Goloka Vrndavana.

The initiation rites mentioned in *Hari-bhati-vilasa* describe *pumsacarya* as a method of obtaining *siddhi* by chanting. Following the *pumsacarya* process and chanting the prescribed number of times brings *darsana* of the *ista-deva* of a particular *mantra*. The *sadhaka* then requests a boon from that *devata*. This is a "forced *darsana*" technique not appreciated by devotees aspiring for the unalloyed service of Radha and Krsna.

Above all, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu prayed, "My dear Lord Krsna, I only want to serve You birth after birth without any motivation or cessation." Upon understanding the actual meaning and benefits of Gopala-mantra and Kama-gayatri, a devotee will eagerly chant them again and again. Krsna will arrange everything for a *sadhaka* who is greedy for spiritual advancement and intensely desirous of nothing but *Radha-Madbavaprema-bhakti*.

The Best Chanting Time

One should always keep this principle in mind: All activities in devotional service should be performed solely to give pleasure to Radha and Krsna who mercifully manifest before us as the worshipable Deities of Radha-Madhava, Radha-Govinda, Radha-Syamasundara, or Gandharvika-Giridhari. *Sastras* indicate that to please the Deities, Gayatri *mantras* should be chanted while They are awake. In other words, between 21:30 and 3:30 a.m. one should not chant Gayatri because Krsna rests at this time.

The scriptures give exact details on the proper times to chant the Gayatri *mantra* because these times are the best periods for meditation. The sunrise *sandhya* lasts from 24 minutes before sunrise to 24 minutes after sunrise. The day's first Gayatri should be chanted at this time.

Chanting when the stars are still visible and before the sun has risen is best; chanting when the stars have disappeared but the sun has not yet risen is second class; and chanting when the sun is visible is third class.

The noon *sandhya* occurs when the sun reaches the highest point in the sky between sunrise and sunset. The evening *sandhya* starts 24 minutes before sunset and lasts 24 minutes after sunset. Chanting the evening Gayatri within the 24 minutes before sunset is best; chanting after sunset but before the stars appear overhead is second class; and chanting after the stars have appeared is third class. If all this seems too difficult, then Srila Prabhupada's simple suggestion should be followed to chant Gayatri at six a.m.; twelve noon, and six p.m. Of course, the main point is to chant the Gayatri *mantras* three times a day!

By chanting Gayatri at the proper times one worships Lord Visnu's divine consorts, who are all expansions of Srimati Radhika. Visnu's consorts personally preside over these times of the day. In the *smarta* tradition, *brahmanas* worship Brahma and his consort Sarasvati in the morning; Visnu and Laksmi at noon; and Siva and Parvati in the evening. The Vaisnava tradition explains that Sandhya-devi, Gayatri-devi, Savitri-devi and Sarasvati-devi are basically different expanded forms Laksmi-devi. The only distinction between Gayatri and Laksmi is that Laksmi is the original, and Gayatri is Her expansion or specific *sakti* as a *chandas* (poetic meter) to assist us in realizing Visnu. The morning Gayatri invokes Gayatri Devi; noon—Savitri Devi; and evening—Sarasvati Devi.

Should one ask for boons from these presiding Deities of the *sandhyas* upon concluding his Gayatri worship? Gaudiya Vaisnavas do not ask the consorts of the Lord for any boons, other than the mercy to advance in the Lord's pure devotional service.

Since there is a personality underlying all the practices of devotional service, it is an offense to Gayatri-devi, the embodiment of the *sandhyas* (time junctures), not to chant the Gayatri *mantras* at the proper time. "Those who do not perform the *sandhya* rites are ungrateful, and fall into the hell known as Raurava." (SP)

There are traditional means of atonement given for this offense. Some authorities say if you miss the morning Gayatri, you should fast till lunch and chant two sets of Gayatri at the *proper sandhya*. Fasting until evening is the atonement for missing the noon *sandhya*.

However, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura said there is no offense and no atonement necessary if the proper Gayatri *sandhya* is missed due to being engaged in *sankirtana* or preaching Krsna's glories at that time. Such glorification of the Lord is the very essence and meaning of chanting the Gayatri *mantra*. Although no fasting is required, the missed Gayatris should be made up. If one misses morning Gayatri, one should chant two sets of *mantras* at noon. If one misses the morning and noon *mantras* then one should chant three sets of *mantras* during the evening *sandhya*. If one misses the proper time for chanting, it is better to wait until the next *sandhya* and chant two sets, than to chant the Gayatri *mantras* at the wrong time. Chanting the day's three Gayatris before taking rest is definitely the wrong course of action.

"At both junctions of day and night, namely, in the early morning and in the evening, he should be fully absorbed in thoughts of the spiritual master, fire, the sun-god and Lord Visnu, and by chanting the Gayatri-mantra he should worship them." (SB 7.12.3)

Chapter Four

Guru Gayatri

Vision of Guru

The Guru-mantra and the Gaura-mantra are *bija-mantras*, seed or root *mantras*, of larger complete *mantras*. These *bija-mantras* are especially used for offering articles in *puja*. Chanting them helps fix one's attention on the personality being worshiped.

The depth of meditation upon the spiritual master depends on the vision, and vision depends on realization. In the beginning a disciple sees the spiritual master as Krsna Himself, *sdksdd-hari*. He thinks, "My guru is God, the omniscient one, the omnipotent savior and the liberator." Later he will understand that the spiritual master is an empowered representative of God. *The guru is saktyavesa*, invested with a special potency or *sakti* by the Supreme Lord Krsna. This is the potency of mercy, therefore, the *guru* is known as the *krpa-sakti murti*, or the personified form of Krsna's mercy appearing before the conditioned soul.

Finally a sincere and surrendered disciple will understand the eternal identity of the spiritual master. According to his inner desire, the advanced disciple will find the spiritual master situated in a particular mood of devotion; either in *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya*, or *madhurya rasa*. He may realize the *manjari-svarupa* of his *gurudeva*, and understand that she (he) is in the camp of Lalita-sakhi serving under Sri Rupa-manjari. He may perceive that his *gurudeva* is expertly performing *nikunja-seva* to assist Radha-Madhava in Their intimate love affairs.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura explained the identity of the spiritual master: "Sri Guru is the daughter of Vrsabhanu (Srimati Radhika) in the *madhura-rasa*. There are different ways in which different persons, whose faculty of spiritual consciousness has been aroused, judge about their own requirements. Every enlightened person is privileged to have a sight of Sri Guru in accordance with his particular mode of judgement. Sri Guru is that real entity who thus reveals himself to the view of the enlightened soul in a variety of ways.

"Realized by the method of *vatsalya-rasa* (mellow of parental affection), Sri Guru reveals himself as Nanda-Yasoda. In *sakhya-rasa* (mellow of friendly affection), Sri Guru is Sridama-Subala. In *dasya-rasa* (mellow of servitude to the master), the lotus feet of Sri Guru act as Citraka-Patraka. The consideration of all these *ashrayas* (shelter) of the *vishaya* (Krsna—the object of love) arises in the heart while progressing in the service of Sri Guru. They arise spontaneously in the consciousness of fortunate souls upon the appearance of the disposition for spiritual service of the Divinity. We have no other function than the service of Sri Guru." (SCT)

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura (Vinoda-vallari manjari) had this vision of his *guru*: *nikunja-yuno rati-keli-siddhyai, ydyd Ubhiryuktir apeksamyd, tatrdti-ddksydd ati-vallabhasya*, "The *gopis* make all tasteful arrangements for the perfection of Radha-Madhava's intimate conjugal pastimes within the Vraja *nikunjas*. My *gurudeva* is expertly assisting there as a maidservant of the beloved *gopis*."

When questioned about the *rasa* of our Gaudiya *acaryas*, Srila Prabhupada replied, "For the most part, all the *acaryas* in our *parampara* are in *madhurya rasa* (*manjari bhava*)."

Therefore, while chanting the Guru-mantra the disciple will ultimately meditate on his *guru* in his *siddha svarupa* as a *manjari*.

Meaning of Aim

Aim is a *bija* (seed) *mantra*, which like other *bija mantras*, is formed by a combination of the simplest sounds. It is called a *bija* or seed because it contains the energy of a particular *mantra* within it and all the words of the *mantra* expand from it. *Bija mantras*, which denote specific potencies, are primordial sound fragments that have the power to invoke particular energy both within and outside the person uttering them.

Om is the *sat bija* invoking the potency of eternity (*sat*). *Klim* is the *ananda bija* invoking the bliss potency (*hiadini sakti*, Srimati Radhika). *Aim* is the *cit bija* invoking the potency of knowledge, and it is the *bija mantra* for worshiping Goddess Sarasvati.

"The spiritual master opens the eyes of the disciple to the wonders of the spiritual realm, as indicated in the Gayatri prayers by the seed *mantra* of divine knowledge, *aim*. (SB 10.87.33 p.) The c;f-potency of the living entities is manifested in the spiritual world in relationship with the Lord, but in the material world it is forgotten. Yogamaya, the Lord's divine potency of revelation and union, manifests as Divya Sarasvati (the goddess of spiritual knowledge) through the form of the *guru* to reveal *Krsna-sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana* to the aspiring disciple. On the other hand, the Sarasvati who reveals mundane knowledge to the materialists is Brahma's wife, the reflected counterpart of Divya Sarasvati, the eternal spiritual consort of Lord Narayana.

The pure devotee spiritual master is empowered with the *svarupa-sakti* of the Supreme Lord. The *svarupa-sakti* is a combination of Krsna's knowledge potency (*cit* or *samvit-sakti*) and His bliss potency (*ananda* or *hiadini-sakti*) personified as Lord Balarama and Srimati Radhika. The word *aim*, therefore, describes the spiritual master as the source of transcendental knowledge and spiritual strength originating with Sri Baladeva, the original spiritual master. *Aim* also refers to Srimati Radharani, who expands as Divya Sarasvati. Since the spiritual master teaches the disciple how to relish transcendental bliss in Krsna's service, he is also a representative of Srimati Radharani. In the word *aim* a sincere *sadhaka* will find transcendental bliss and knowledge coming from Sri Guru, who is empowered with *svarupa-sakti* to represent Lord Balarama and Srimati Radharani.

The Guru-mantra and Gaura-mantra are *mula mantras* used for worshiping the spiritual master and Lord Gauranga. *Mula mantras* are formed by combinations of *bijas* used alone or with names of Deities. Such *mula mantras*, being nondifferent from the Deity, represent the essence of the Deity in sound. They are chanted during meditation to fix the mind on the Deity or recited to address the Lord or the spiritual master while offering articles of worship. When offering flowers to a picture of the spiritual master, for example, one should chant "*idam pushpam, aimguruve namah*" which includes the *mula mantra for guru*, and the *mantra* for offering flowers. All *mula mantras* for worshiping *visnu-tattva* Deities use the *bija* syllable *klim*.

Meaning of Guru-mantra

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master." "I meditate on Sri Hari who has assumed the form of Sri Guru. He has an eternal body filled with pure devotion, and his lotus feet are full of the nectar of mercy. He has a golden complexion, wears white cloth, and a fragrant garland. He is an abode of all good qualities and the bestower of good fortune."
(*Yamala*)

"The *guru* is effulgent and cooling as 10,000 moons. His beautiful hands award fearlessness and display the *madras* of benediction. He wears white cloth, a divine garland of white flowers, and is decorated with *candana*. An abode of peace, **He** has lotus eyes, a very happy face, and he delights in his *bhajana*.

"He has a *sat-cit-ananda* form and readily gives his blessings. He is a handsome, radiant youth (*kaisora*) with a beautiful golden complexion. Sri Guru faithfully follows his *guru-gana* (*guru parampara*), and he is very eager to serve the Lord. With a pure mind the *sadhaka* should meditate like this upon his *gurudeva*." (*Sanat-kumara Samhita*)

Through the Guru-gayatri a *sadhaka* awakens his appreciation for the spiritual master by whose mercy all the wonderful truths of Krsna consciousness have been revealed. A sincere disciple can attain full *guru-darsana*, and realize the eternal spiritual form of the spiritual master by the power of this *mantra*. Fixing the mind on the merciful form of Sri Guru, who is always absorbed in *Krsna-prema*, the disciple begs for his mercy and continual revelations about the identity of Sri Guru, Gauranga and Radha Giridhari.

The word *Krsndnandaya*, which is part of the *abhidheya* aspect of Guru-gayatri, indicates the mood of the *guru's* loving service to Radharani. Just as the word Syama is a name of Krsna and the word Syama is a name of Radharani, similarly, the word Krsna is a name for Radharani. While meditating on this *mantra*, one should think how the spiritual master is always giving great bliss, *dnanda*, to Srimati Radharani by his various services.

"Let me try to understand my spiritual master who is always in blissful Krishna consciousness. Let me meditate on him being enthused as he enthuses me."

"The Gayatri *mantra* provides us with a meditation on the spiritual master which maybe applied to Srila Prabhupada. There are actually two *mantras* to the spiritual master in the Gayatri. The first is *aim gurave namah*: I make my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master.' This means one should approach Srila Prabhupada not as a buddy, but as one would approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead, bowing down and offering obeisances. Srila Prabhupada actually is a most intimate friend, but he should not be taken as an ordinary person.

"The Gayatri *mantra* advises us 'to meditate on him being enthused.' Once when commenting on the word enthusiasm (*utsaha*) used in Rupa Gosvami's *Upadesamrta*, Srila Prabhupada gave himself as an example. He said, 'How could I have come to America at such an old age unless I was enthusiastic?' He was enthusiastic to come to America because his *guru* ordered, and when for a whole year he got almost no response in America, Srila Prabhupada remained patient, but still enthusiastic. That enthusiasm can be heard on tape recordings of Prabhupada lecturing on the Lower East Side, where his voice often cracks with earnestness to deliver the message of Krsna consciousness.

"Prabhupada was so enthusiastic to write *Srimad Bhagavatam* that he would rise at one in the morning to do so. His composing of his purports was the perfect example of combined patience and enthusiasm. As he said, 'Little drops of water wear away the stone. In this way, I've written all these books.' "Let us meditate" the Gayatri *mantra* advises, and so one can continue on his own, or in the association of devotees, to think about and to discuss the enthusiastic moods and activities of His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada.

"Prabhupada's translation contains a particularly interesting phrase, 'let me meditate on him being enthused as he enthuses us.' A genuine disciple has become enthusiastic in devotional service, and he knows that this is due to the enthusiasm of his spiritual master. We may meditate on how our enthusiastic spiritual master has transferred this *sakti* of *utsaha* to us. Prabhupada said that the mother of his disciple, Acyutananda, complained that her son used to lounge around the house all the time and was unwilling to go on errands. But since he had come to live with Swamiji, he was always enthusiastic to cook and to run any errands asked by his spiritual master.

"Srila Prabhupada was also fond of a pamphlet produced by a Christian minister in Boston which made reference to Srila Prabhupada's enthusiastic disciples. The minister said that he met a Hare Krsna devotee giving out literature in the neighborhood of the church. The priest said, 'These are actually our boys, but previously they were never interested in going to church. Now they have become mad after God.' Srila Prabhupada also said that it was only by the enthusiasm of his disciples that the Krishna Consciousness Movement was spreading around the world.

"When we do not feel enthusiastic, let us meditate on the enthusiasm of Srila Prabhupada. Let it ignite within us our natural enthusiasm to serve Krsna. This is *krsnanandaya*, which motivates all the thoughts and activities of a pure devotee of the Lord. Whether he is grave and silent, or dancing in the *kirtana* of Lord Caitanya, whether he is being honored by many followers, or treated as an outcaste, the pure Vaisnava is always merged in enthusiasm and bliss. Let us meditate upon him being enthused just as he enthused us." (PM vol.1)

Before chanting Guru-gayatri, one should meditate on Lord Caitanya sitting on a golden throne surrounded by Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Gadadhara Pandita and His other most intimate associates. Sitting on a platform below Them is one's *paramo. gum parampara*, and one's own *gumdeva*. All the *gurus* have effulgent golden complexions and are dressed in pure white garments. In the mind one should worship his *gumdeva* and the *guru parampara* with garlands, sandalwood paste, flowers, and other *puja* paraphernalia. Then chant the Guru-gayatri.

Chapter Five

Gaura Gayatri

Meaning of Gaura Mantra

"I make my respectful obeisances unto Lord Caitanya."

Before chanting the Gaura-mantra one can meditate upon Lord Gauranga in Sri Navavipa Dhama. "Sitting in the middle of the estate of Sri Jagannatha Misra is a beautiful temple adorned with the jewel of pure devotion. Nine splendid jeweled pots are situated around the top of that temple. The interior is decorated with sapphires and strings of pearls hanging from the ceiling. Each of the four doors of this temple is divided into eight panels studded with eight types of gems. An opulent cloth canopy with ruby and moonstone fringe hangs from the ceiling.

"In this temple is a *yoga-pitha* lotus (*yantra*) made of gold, decorated with jewels and inscribed with the letters of the six-syllable Gaura-mantra (*klim gauraya namah*). It is shaped like a tortoise shell and is very beautiful. The center of this *yoga-pitha* is a hexagram that resembles the central whorl of a lotus. This lotus is very pure and holy, and it is as brilliant as millions of suns and moons.

"In this *yoga-pitha* lotus there is a costly jeweled throne. The lower sides are inlaid with rubies; the columns are made of sapphires, and the backrest is made of *lapis lazuli*. Clusters of gems and pearls hang from its splendid canopy. The throne is covered with a thick cotton seat and has a beautiful soft bolster shaped like the moon. It also has eight footrests. The letters of the Gaura-mantra (*klim gauraya namah*) are inscribed in gems and jewels on this eight-sided *yoga-pitha* lotus seat.

"I meditate upon the golden-hued Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu whose beautiful hair is bound with a string of pearls. His moonlike face bears a gentle, sweet smile. His body is anointed with *candana*, *agum*, and draped in beautiful cloth. Mahaprabhu is decorated with a divine garland and ornaments. He is dancing ecstatically, absorbed in relishing *madhurya-rasa*. He is more brilliant than the god of love, and is always served by His *devotees*." (GGS)

One can chant the Gaura-mantra while meditating on a Deity of Mahaprabhu, the unified form of Rasaraja Krsna and Mahabhava Radhika. Although the Gaura-mantra only contains three words, it is very significant because of the word *gauraya*. The word *gauraya*, like the word Gauranga mentioned below, refers to Radha and Krsna who have beautifully combined in Their most merciful form as Srīman Mahaprabhu. The Gaura-mantra, therefore, and in fact all the other *mantras* chanted by members of ISKCON direct one to the unalloyed, loving service of Radha-Govinda in Vraja Gokula.

"You are chanting the Gaura-gopala *mantra* composed of four syllables. Now please give up the doubts that have resided within you." (Cc.Antya2.32)

"Srīla Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains the Gaura-gopala *mantra* in his *Amṛta-pravḍha-bhāṣya*. Worshipers of Sri Gaurasundara accept the four syllables, *gau-ra-an-ga* as the Gaura *mantra*, but pure worshipers of Radha and Krsna accept the four syllables *rd-dhd krs-na* as the Gaura-gopala *mantra*. However, Vaisnavas consider Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu nondifferent from Radha-Krsna (*sn-krsna-caitanya rddhd-krsna nahe anya*). Therefore one who chants the *mantra* Gauranga, and one who chants the names of Radha and Krsna are on the same level." (Cc. Antya 2.32 p.)

Gaura-gayatri Meaning of Words

The Gaura-gayatri glorifies Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who has so kindly appeared in this Kali-yuga to distribute freely *Krsna-prema* to one and all. This *mantra* focuses a devotee's mind on

the sweet personal nature of the Golden Avatara. In Gaura-gayatri, Krsna appears as Sri Krsna Caitanya (*klim caitanyaya vidmahe*) to enlighten the *jiva* with transcendental knowledge about his eternal spiritual identity and give him life—a carefree, joyful spiritual existence. As Visvambhara (*yisvambharaya dhimahl*) the Lord maintains the "new born" devotee with His mercy, and nourishes him with the elixir of *bhakti-rasa*

By constantly remembering Visvambhara a *sadhaka* can easily practice *sadhana-bhakti* and attain the stage of rendering unalloyed devotional service. Then the Lord appears as Gaura (*gaura pracodayat*) Gauranga, the beautiful Lord Gaurasundara to inspire and drive the devotee forward toward the eternal loving service of Radha-Govinda within the groves of Vrndavana.

"Sri Krsna is present in the hearts of all living entities as the Supersoul or *caitanya*. The word "*caitanya*" means living force. I offer my obeisances again and again to that repository of total consciousness manifested in the form of Sri Caitanya Deva. Caitanya means that the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna has descended as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in the form of pure transcendental consciousness. If someone can comprehend the glories of Sri Caitanya as the primordial cause of the creation, it can lead him to the kingdom of immortality, eternal life and living force.

"The word *caitanya* means, 'He makes the world *cetana* or alive to the affairs of Krsna.' Mahaprabhu took *sannyasa* to generate *caitanya* (life) *mjivas* that were without it." (SCT)

The word *visvambharaya* means the maintainer of the universe. Another meaning is that through His divine teachings, causeless mercy, and compassionate servitors Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is maintaining and nourishing the spontaneous spirit of loving devotion (*raga-bhakti*) growing in the hearts of His sincere followers.

As previously described, the last section of the Gaura-gayatri contains *prayojana tattva*. The word *gaurah* means *gau*—Govinda, and *ro*—Radha. The word *gaurah* carries one toward Radha-Govinda jorema, which Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu personally tasted and freely distributed to everyone.

"Let us meditate on Lord Caitanya, who is understood as the maintainer of the universe, and who enthuses us too."

While chanting the Gaura-gayatri, meditate on Radha and Krsna unifying to become Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu (Rasaraja Mahabhava), the most-merciful *prema-avatara*. Think of the pastime of Ramananda Raya seeing one Mahaprabhu suddenly dividing into Radha and Krsna. The form of Lord Caitanya manifests when Radha and Krsna come together in a divine union saturated with the most completely intense and nectarean love.

Chapter Six

THE GOPALA MANTRA

Identity and Importance ,

"It is stated in the *Brahma-samhita* that Lord Brahma was initiated into the eighteen letter Gopala-mantra, which is generally accepted by all the devotees of Lord Krsna. We follow the same principle because we belong to the Brahma-sampradaya; directly in the disciplic chain from Brahma to Narada, from Narada to Vyasa, from Vyasa to Madhva Muni, from Madhva Muni to Madhavendra Puri, from Madhavendra Puri to Isvara Puri, from Isvara Puri to Lord Caitanya and gradually to His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, our divine master. The chanting of this holy Gopala-mantra is the only shelter of the desireless pure devotee of the Lord." (SB 2.9.6 p.)

Of all the *diksa mantras* mentioned in the *sastras*, the Gopala-mantra (or Krsna-mantra) is the most important. Sri Krsna is the *svayam-bhagavan* and the *sarva-avatari* (original Personality of Godhead, the source of all other *avatars*), and His *vraja-lila* displays the greatest amount of beauty and sweetness. Similarly, the Gopala-mantra, which manifests Krsna and induces that unique *vraja-madhurya-rasa* to flow in the heart, is the greatest of all *diksa mantras*. The *mantra* is called the Krsna-mantra or Gopala-mantra because it describes Krsna in Gokula, the abode of cows, wherein the Lord plays as Gopala, the eternal lover of the *gopis* and the protector of the cows. Nevertheless, one should always remember that the Hare Krsna *mantra* is called the *maha-mantra* because it is more powerful than any other *mantra* in bestowing *Krsna-prema*.

The eighteen syllable Gopala-mantra is described in the *Gopala-tapani Upanisad* and *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*. It is one of the most important *mantras* in the Gaudiya-sampradaya. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was initiated into the ten-syllable Gopala-mantra (*gopijanavallabhaya svaha*) by His *guru*, Sripad Isvara Puri. The *mantra* means, "I offer oblations unto Krsna, Gopijanavallabha, the beloved of *the gopis*." Since *the: gopis* are Krsna's most intimate associates, the Gopala-mantra is one of the most confidential *mantras*. The *Pancaratra* also mentions a *siddha* Gopala-mantra that has an extra *tantric* syllable *om srin*.

The Gopala-mantra is also mentioned in the *Gautamiya-tantra* and in the *Narada-pancaratra* which describes how Lord Brahma gave the eighteen-syllable Gopala-mantra to Lord Siva who then gave it to Narada Muni. Although the Gopala-mantra is the same, it can be formulated differently with eighteen, twelve, ten (as used by Lord Caitanya) or eight syllables. In chanting the ten-syllable Gopala-mantra, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu tasted one aspect of the *gopis'* *prayojana*, or pure love for Krsna.

By the mercy of Sanatana Gosvami and other exalted Vaisnavas, the Gopala-mantra is now prevalent in the *sampradaya*. Before the appearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu this *mantra* was not made available to everyone. It was only given to qualified persons with substantial piety. The Gopala-mantra is *cintamani*, the sweetest of the secret *mantras*.

As described in the *Brahma-samhita*, the primary purpose of the Gopala-mantra is to make the soul chase after Krsna, the all-attractive Lord of the *gopis*. However, because it contains the *kama-bija* (the seed of desire) the Gopala-mantra can also satisfy material or spiritual desires. In Goloka Vrndavana or for a pure devotee the *kama-bija* fulfills spiritual desires for Krsna's loving service. When the same *kama-bija* is pervertedly reflected in the material world, it satisfies material desires. Lord Brahma fulfilled his material desire for creation by chanting the Gopala-mantra. One should pray to Krsna to become pure, totally free of all material desires.

Through the mercy of Gopala one may realize the true meaning of the *mantra* and then run after Krsna to serve His lotus feet.

Gopala-mantra and Sambandha

The Gopala-mantra is a direct glorification and meditation on Krsna's form, qualities and pastimes. This *mantra* establishes *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*. Although the eighteen-syllable Gopala-mantra progresses through *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*, it mainly emphasizes *sambandha-jnana* and *abhidheya*. Madana-mohan, the Lord of *sambandha-tattva* is represented in the Gopala-mantra. The Kama-gayatri, however, represents *prayojana*. This *mantra* is the complete means to develop one's love for Krsna. It will give *darsana* of Radha and Krsna, Gopijanavallabha surrounded by Lalita, Visakha and the *sakhis*. The *sadhaka* will be given a chance to serve Them.

The general meaning of the *mantra* is that anyone desiring to enter the pastimes of Krsna will have to practice his transcendental service along with the culture of devotional knowledge in relationship to Krsna (*sambandha-jnana*). There are six aspects of *sambandha-jnana* denoted in the Gopala-mantra:

- 1) *Krsna svarupa*—knowledge of the personal form of Krsna.
- 2) *Krsnasya cin-maya-vraja-lila-vilasa-svarupa*—true knowledge of Krsna's blissful transcendental pastimes in Vraja (Vrndavana).
- 3) *Tat-parikara-gopijana-svarupa*—knowledge about Krsna's *vraja-gopis* and His eternal associates in Vrndavana.
- 4) *Tad-vallabha*—knowledge of self surrender to Krsna in the footsteps of the Vraja *gopis*.
- 5) *Suddha-jivasya-cid (jnana)-svarupa*—knowledge of the spiritual form of the pure, unalloyed soul.
- 6) *Cit-praktir arthat krsna-seva-svabhava*—knowledge of transcendental service to Krsna which is established with the awakening of one's pure cognition.

Both the Brahma-gayatri and the Gopala-mantra reveal the three aspects of transcendence: *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*. However, Gaudiyas emphasize the aspect of *abhidheya*, transcendental loving service to Govinda Deva, which is indicated by the word *Govindaya* in the Gopala-mantra. Actually the central point of love and attraction for the Lord is expressed through service. Govindaji, the beloved Deity installed by Sri Rupa Gosvami, is the inspirational Deity of devotional service for the entire Gaudiya Sampradaya. Moreover, both as a *sadhaka* and a *siddha* one is always under the shelter of Govindaji and Sri Rupa Gosvami. As a *sadhaka* one serves Sri Rupa Gosvami, and as a realized soul one serves Sri Rupa Manjari and her maidservants. The word *gopijanavallabhaya* indicates the *prayojana* aspect displayed in the intimate loving exchanges between Radha and Krsna. On this level Sri Radha serves alone as Ananga (the embodiment of amorous love) and the maidservants watch in appreciation.

The Gopala-mantra reveals three manifestations of Krsna as three presiding Deities with different moods and effects. *Krsnaya* refers to Krsna as Madan-mohana, the supreme enchanter presiding over *sambandha-tattva*. *Govindaya* refers to Govindaji, the supreme engager, who oversees *abhidheya-tattva*. *Gopijanavallabhaya* refers to Gopinatha, the beloved Lord of the *gopis* who directs and distributes the *prayojana-tattva*.

What the Gopala-mantra awakens is fully revealed in the Kama-gayatri, which reveals Radha and Krsna's pastimes in the divine realm of Vraja. These two *mantras* work together to bring the devotee closer to perfection. All these truths are found within the *bija-mantras*, but in a seed-like or unmanifested form. The *bija-mantra Om*, for example, which some *acaryas* say represents Radha-Krsna, Their blissful pastimes and the living entity, contains this sweet reality in a hidden way, whereas, in the *bija-mantra kllm* these truths are significantly more manifest.

Gopala-mantra –Svarasiki and Mantra Upasana

There are two methods for internally visualizing the unmanifested pastimes of Radha and Krsna known as *svarasiki* and *mantra upasana* (*mantra-mayi*).

1) *Mantra upasana*—chanting or meditating upon a particular *mantra* that causes the manifestation of only one pastime of Krsna. In *mantra upasana* the *sadhaka* meditates on a particular form of Krsna (*rupa-dhyana*) or a scene from His transcendental pastimes as depicted in a *sastric sloka* or a *mantra* given by the *guru*. The most common form of *mantra upasana* is meditation on the Vrndavana Yogapitha at Govindasthali. Radha-Govinda are sitting on a gem-studded, golden throne surrounded by the *asta-sakhis* and *manjaris* who sing blissfully while Lalita-sakhi offers *arati*. The following verse, which *acaryas* claim to be the "best *sloka* in the entire *Srimad Bhagavatam* for remembering Krsna" can be used for the process of *mantra upasana*.

*barhdpidam nata'vara-vapuh karnayoh karmkdram
bibhrad vdsah kanaka'kapisam vaijayantim ca mdldm randhrdn
venor adhara'sudhaydpurayan gopa'vrndair
vrnddranyam sva'pada'ramanam prdvisad gita-klrtih*

"Wearing a peacock feather upon His head, yellow *kamikdra* flowers on His ears, a glittering golden yellow garment, and the Vaijayanti garland, Krsna exhibited His supremely captivating form, just like the best of dramatic dancers as He entered the charming forest of Vrndavana, beautifying it with the marks of His lotus feet. He filled the holes of His flute with the nectar of His lips. The cowherd boys followed behind Him singing His glories which purify the entire world." (SB 10.19.5)

The transcendental words contained in the Gopala-mantra make a manifestation of only one pastime of Krsna. Lord Brahma himself was doing *mantra upasana* as mentioned in the *Caitanya-caritamrta*. *ydndra dhydna nija-loke karepadmdsana, astddasdksara-mantre kare upasana*, "Lord Brahma, sitting on his lotus seat in his own abode, always meditates on Him, (Govinda surrounded by Radharani and the *gopis* as mentioned in verse 22), and worships Him with the *mantra* consisting of eighteen-syllables." (*Cc.Adi5.221p.*)

"In his own planet, Lord Brahma, with the inhabitants of that planet, worships the form of Lord Govinda, Krsna, by the *mantra* of eighteen-syllables, *klim krsndya govinddya gopi-jana-vallabhdyā svdhd*. Those who are initiated by a bona fide spiritual master and who chant the Gayatri-mantra three times a day know this *astddasdksara* (eighteen-syllable) *mantra*. The inhabitants of Brahmaloaka and the planets below Brahmaloaka worship Lord Govinda by meditating with this *mantra*. There is no difference between meditating and chanting, but in the present age meditation is not possible on this planet. Therefore loud chanting of a *mantra* like

the *maha-mantra*. Hare Krsna, with soft chanting of the *astddasdksara*, the *mantra* of eighteen syllables, is recommended." {Cc.Adi 5.221p.)

In his purport to the *Brahma-samhita* text three, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati defines *mantra* as "inaudibly recited, liberating, self-dedicatory, transcendental sound." In transcendence there is no duality; consequently the distinction between an object and its name cease to exist in the spiritual world. Thus a *mantra* consisting of Krsna's holy names is nondifferent from the person Krsna. This transcendental phenomenon is experienced when "worshiping through the channel of the *mantra*," which is known as *mantra upasana*.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati further states that the "transcendental words contained in the said *mantra* being differently placed make a manifestation of only one *lila*." In other words, the specific arrangement of the *mantra's* component words in relationship to each other determines its meaning. The twenty-four syllable Kama-gayatri *mantra*, for example, reveals Radha and Krsna's transcendental pastimes. The conjugal mood predominates in Krsna's transcendental abode with all the other *rasas* playing supporting roles. In the eighteen-syllable Gopala-mantra, Krsna, Govinda, is being worshiped as the lover of the *gopis*. Yet based upon one's *sthayi-bhava* (eternal loving mood), one will meditate upon the *mantra* according to his specific corresponding emotion.

2) *Svarasiki*—the spontaneous outflow of the heart's spiritual love for Krsna, which reveals variegated pastimes performed in different moods and planes. Meditation on *rasa-Ula*, which moves through many moods and scenes, is an example of *svarasiki*. *Mantra upasana* is compared to a placid lake existing alongside a rushing river. *Svarasiki* meditation is that constantly moving river of dynamic visualization.

Purpose of the Gopala-mantra

"Then the goddess of learning Sarasvati, the divine consort of the Supreme Lord, said thus to Brahma who saw nothing but gloom in all directions, "O Brahma, this *mantra*, viz., *klim krsndya govindya gopi-jana-vallabhya svdhd*, will assuredly fulfill your heart's desire." (BS v. 24)

The purpose of the Gopala-mantra is to direct one toward Radha and Krsna in Gokula. It will fulfill the spiritual desire to love Krsna, and draw the devotee toward the lotus feet of Radha and Krsna. As the spiritual world is reflected in the material world, so also the Gopala-mantra is reflected on the sea of material desires. *Kama bija* has a two-fold aspect: one fulfills material desires, the other satisfies spiritual desires.

When the chanting of the Gopala-mantra is not pure, it is a reflection and therefore not transcendental. It is like the chanting of the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* in the *abhasa* state. Until one attains pure devotion, the vibration of the Gopala-mantra is impure. The pure *mantra* is being reflected in the mundane world within the materially contaminated mind in such a way that it fulfills one's material desires.

The Gopala-mantra is the source of all other divine *mantras*. Pure-minded devotees chant this wonderful *mantra* with unalloyed devotion; free from any material desire. The demigods also chant this *mantra*, but their motive is tinged with selfish desires. In the next entry Lord Brahma shows the example for all sincere devotees. "Not only I (Brahma), but Lord Siva and King Candradvaja received this wonderful *klim mantra*, and by chanting it we became free from ignorance, received a vision of the Lord, and realized that Sri Krsna is the final goal of life.

Therefore, a dedicated, unalloyed devotee who chants this *mantra* will surely attain realization of the Supreme Lord Krsna as the final resort." (GU 1.29-32)

The Gopala-mantra, consisting of Krsna's names (Krsna, Govinda, Gopijanavallabha) is non-different from the Supreme Lord. The process of chanting and attentively meditating upon such a *mantra* is called *mantra-upasana*, or worship through the channel of the *mantra*. As one chants the Gopala-mantra, he progressively realizes Krsna's form, qualities and pastimes. He also realizes his own spiritual form and becomes established in his eternal service to Krsna. *Mantra-upasana* meditation must be accompanied by service to Krsna. Under the direction of Sarasvati, Lord Brahma, the head of our *sampradaya*, performed *mantra-upasana* meditation. After thousands of years of meditating upon Gopijanavallabha, Brahma attained perfection.

As mentioned in Chapter one, each *mantra* has a particular *ista-deva* or ruling Deity. The Deity of the Gopala-mantra is Gopala Krsna. The particular form of Gopala depends on the individual sentiments of a devotee. For those in *sakhya-bhava* Gopala takes the cows out for grazing. Gopala sits on Yasoda's lap for those with parental love. Devotees in *madhurya-rasa* see Him as Kisorā Gopala pleasing the senses of His beloved Kishori.

The Gopala-mantra is used primarily for arcana and the Kama-gayatri is for *sandhya* meditation. Similarly, the Gaura-mantra is for worship and the Gaura-gayatri is for *sandhya* meditation. It appears that the same results can be had from either the Gopala-mantra or the Kama-gayatri, but the *Brahma-samhita* indicates that the Kama-gayatri, being given later to Lord Brahma, gave more complete realization of Krsna.

"This mystic eighteen-syllable Gopala-mantra conveys the *svayam-rupa* Sri Krsna with Srimati Radhika on an emerald-studded golden throne sitting in the center of a thousand petaled lotus flower under a wish-fulfilling tree. at the *yogapitha* in Vrndavana. They are being attended by thousands of *vraja-gopis*. The constant remembrance of this pastime at the stage *oisadhana* ultimately leads to the attainment of *vastu-siddhi*, the final goal." (GU)

Meaning of Klim

Klim is the *bija-mantra* of the Gopala-mantra and Kama-gayatri. *Klim* is non-different from *Omkara*. It is the seed of all desires, or the seed that fulfills all desires. When added to the Gopala-mantra, *klim* is the transcendental seed of love of Godhead. *Klim* is the *bija-mantra* for worshiping Krsna (*klim krsnaya*), and it also represents Radha and Krsna.

"The word *klim*. represents the seed of desire or aspiration. The Gopala-mantra has two aspects: It impels the soul toward the supreme enchanter of the heart, Krsna, the Lord of Gokula and the Lord of the *gopis*. When the devotee *sadhaka* becomes free from selfish desire, he can attain the perfection of divine love of God, *prema*. But if the *sadhaka* still harbors some personal individual desires, this supreme Gopala-mantra will fulfill those desires too." (BS v.24 p.) Chanting the Gopala-mantra impels or makes one think of the form of Krsna as Madana-mohana, the supreme enchanter of Cupid who captivates the entire creation.

The *Rasollasa Tantra* describes that *klim* is nondifferent from Radha and Krsna. It says that Krsna is the very *kama-bija* Himself, and Radha is the very *rati-bija* Herself. By performing *sankirtana* of both these *bijas*, Radha and Krsna become very pleased. Kama (desire) is the

name of the transcendental Krsna, Cupid, the God of love in Vrndavana. Rati (amorous affection) is the name of Cupid's wife, but in this reference Rati means Sri Radha.

"The *kama-bija klim* (the seed of desire) is the very seed which—is one's own desire or aspiration, stimulates one's desire, and is fulfilled by one's desires." (MD) This word *klim* can fulfill all desires, either material or spiritual. It will reward the result of one's prayers. *Klim* represents divine lust; the *gopis'* selfless love to satisfy Krsna's desires. The *kama-bija klim* contains all the elements of the love between Radha and Krsna.

The *kama bija (klim)* is the main *mantra* for achieving the service of Radha and Krsna in Vrndavana. The *kama bija mantra* acts as the transcendental seed of love of Godhead. The ever-fresh Krsna Cupid is worshiped by uttering the *klim mantra*.

The word *klim*, which is the *kama-bija* or the seed of desire, contains the syllables *ka* and *la* which can be taken to mean Kalavati (Radha) and Kalanidhi (Krsna). In verse forty-four of *Vilapa-kusumanjall*, Srila Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami prays to the Divine Couple with these two names: "O Devi, when Krsna, the enemy of Mura, touches Your lowered shoulders in the *rasa* dance, He looks like a full moon (Kalanidhi), shining with an abundance of lust. O Kalavati! (artful girl) When will this maidservant joyfully place a sweet jasmine garland, surrounded by humming bees, on those shoulders?"

Srila Ramananda Raya extols the unique position of Srimati Radharani: *sata-koti-gopite nahe kdma-nirvdpna, tdhdeitei anumdni sri-rddhikdra gima*, "Out of millions *oigopis*, only Srimati Radhika (Kalavati) can extinguish the blazing fire of Krsna's lusty desires. So we can just imagine how transcendently qualified She is." (Cc. *Madhya* 8.116) The word *klim* is the seed of desire that grows into the Kama-gayatri of twenty-four and one-half syllables. Each of these syllables is like a shining full moon of lust (Kalanidhi) on each limb of Krsna's gorgeous body. Even though Kalanidhi Krsna's moonlike splendor fills the whole world with desire, still His desires increase unlimitedly when He sees the splendid moonlike face of Kalavati Radha.

One should think of the word *klim* as the seed of desire referring to Kalanidhi Krsna and Kalavati Radha who alone fulfills all His desires, and whose service the *sadhaka* desires to attain. In *Sri Radha-sahasra-nama stotra*, Narada Muni says, *kdma-bija-praddyinr*. "Srimati Radhika gives the seed of desire to attain Sri Krsna."

Meaning of Krsnaya

Krsnaya means Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who delivers us from sin (*papa-karsana*), and the Deity who establishes our relationship (*sambandha*)-with the Lord. He liberates the demons He kills, and attracts the minds and hearts of the fallen with His blissful transcendental pastimes.

The word *Krsnaya* is based on two Sanskrit roots: *krs* which means existence or to draw near, and *na* which means *ananda*, bliss, or to renounce. Thus *Krsnaya* indicates Krsna, the ultimate existence of bliss and beauty, who attracts or draws everyone to His lotus feet with His incomparably sweet form, flute, love, and play. Such sweet love and enchanting attraction causes one to renounce the misery of material attachment.

"The very name Kṛṣṇa means that He attracts even Cupid. He is therefore attractive to everyone—male and female, moving and inert living entities. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa is known as the all-attractive one." (Cc. *Madhya* 8.139)

Meaning of Govindaya

Govindaya means Govinda who pleases the cows, land, senses, *gopas*, and *gopis*. Govinda is the transcendental Deity form of Kṛṣṇa who establishes our service (*abhidheya*) to the Lord. The name Govinda comes from the words 'go' and 'indate.' *Go* means cows, *gopas*, *gopis* and the five senses. *Indate* means 'master or lord.' So the word *govindaya* means the lord of the five senses.

Kṛṣṇa Govinda is all-attractive, and there is no one more attracted to Him than Srimatī Rādhikā. While meditating on the word *govindaya*, one can remember the following description of the enchanting nature of Govinda's transcendental senses.

Srimatī Rādhikā said, "Hey Viśakhe! Govinda's bodily effulgence is more beautiful than a new monsoon cloud, and His gorgeous garments resemble lightning. Kṛṣṇa's captivating flute enhances His elegance, and His face outshines the autumn moon. A peacock-feathered crown rests upon His head, and the necklaces of pearls and jewels adorning His broad chest look like a row of stars. O *sakhī*! The sight of Kṛṣṇa's incomparable beauty is saturating My eyes with bliss.

"Kṛṣṇa's deep voice resounds like a rumbling cloud and His tinkling ornaments allure the ears. Kṛṣṇa's joking has seductive hidden meanings, and His charming flute playing steals the hearts of all chaste women. Oh Viśakhe! My ears are totally captivated by Kṛṣṇa.

"The fragrance of Govinda's body conquers the aroma of musk to enslave all women. The eight richly scented lotuses of His body are more fragrant than a mixture of lotus flowers and camphor. His body is anointed with the finest quality *aguru*, camphor, *candana* and musk. Needless to say, these wonderful fragrances are continually thrilling My nose.

"Hey *sakhī*! I am intensely eager to touch Kṛṣṇa's broad chest, which is as enticing as a sapphire pillar. His strong arms bolt the door of the *gopis*' hearts from the attack of Cupid's arrows. Govinda's body is more soothing than moonbeams, *candana*, camphor and a lotus combined.

"The nectar of Kṛṣṇa's sweet lips removes the desire for any other taste. However, that nectar is attainable only for one possessing heaps of pious assets. The remnants of Kṛṣṇa's *pan* conquer the sweetness of nectar. Oh Viśakhe! My tongue is becoming mad to relish the sweet taste of Kṛṣṇa." (*Govinda-līlāmṛta*)

Meaning of Gopijanavallabhaya

Gopijanavallabhaya means Gopinātha, who sports with the *gopis*, and the Deity who helps one attain pure love of God, the ultimate goal of life (*prayojana*). *Gopijanavallabhaya* denotes Kṛṣṇa, the beloved of the *gopis*, who enchants them with His sweetness and gives them ecstatic love.

Gopijana—*go* means *jnana*, knowledge. It also means one who is realized by knowledge of Govinda, or one who knows all the inner feelings of the devotees. *Go* means Govinda, Sri Krsna, who always pastures and tends the cows in the valleys beside Govardhana Hill. The word *gopi* means the cosmic preserving force, or the women of Vraja. Krsna is the *vallabha*, the Lord of that force and the Lord of the women of Vraja. The word *gopijanavallabha*, therefore, means, "The lover of the *gopis* is preserving the force of my devotion and pervading all of my senses (*govinda*)."

Vallabha—Sn Krsna, the blissful Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the dearmost life of the *gopis* and all *janas* (living entities), and He pervades them all. *Vallabha* also means a dense mass of bliss.

"Lord Sadasiva told Narada Muni, 'Anyone who meditates upon Radha and Krsna's beautiful bodily features and ornaments while chanting the following prayers will attain the eternal abode of Krsna and the *gopis*:' *gopljana-vallabha-caranaai saranam prapadye*, "I take shelter of He who is the beloved of the *gopis*." *Namo gopijanavallabhabhyam*, "I offer my respectful obeisances to the Divine Couple who are very dear to the *gopis*." (SKS) "I surrender to Radha and Krsna. Whatever is mine is in truth, Their property. Everything is for Their sake. Everything is for Their enjoyment. It is not for me."

Gopijanavallabhaya—"Krsna wears yellow clothing and a long garland of fragrant wild flowers. He has a beautiful swarthy complexion the color of a dark rain cloud. His head is bedecked with a peacock feather. His face is radiant like a million moons and His eyes are rolling. Yellow *karnikara* flowers are tucked above His ears, and golden *makara* earrings as effulgent as the rising sun hang below His ears. His forehead is adorned with a circle of sandalwood containing a dot of *kunkuma* in its center.

"Syama's face is beautified by tiny pearl-like drops of perspiration. His eyebrows playfully dance as He casts a sidelong glance at the face of His beloved Radhika. A pearl dangles from the tip of His nose, His radiant teeth glisten like moonlight, and His attractive lips are as red as ripe *bimba* fruit. His hands are adorned with bracelets and a jeweled seal ring. He holds the *murali* in His left hand and a lotus in His right. A sash of small jingling bells ornaments His beautiful waist, and splendid anklebells adorn His lotus feet." (SKS)

Meaning of Svaha

Svaha represents the potency of the Lord. It is usually chanted while offering oblations into the fire. The word has both outer and inner meanings. "*Sva*" can mean, "one who is conversant with the inner self." It can also mean, "I am a maidservant of the *gopis*." "*Ha*" can refer to, "the transcendental nature." It can also mean, "to sacrifice and give everything to Krsna just as the *gopis* do."

"The word *svaha* means the *jivatma* is surrendered wholly to the light of the Paramatma, the supreme spirit, Sri Krsna, who is one without a second, the Supreme Lord, and the cause of all causes." (NP)

Additional definitions of *svaha* are given in Chapter eight.

Gopala-mantra Word Meanings

The *Gopala-tapani Upanisad* describes how the four Kumaras once asked their father Brahma, "Who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead? Whom does death fear? By knowing whom does everything else become known? Who created this world?"

"Brahma replied by giving them the eighteen-syllable Gopala-mantra and said, 'Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Death fears Govinda. Everything becomes known by understanding Gopijanavallabha. The Personality of Godhead created the world by pronouncing the word *svaha*.' " (GU)

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura comments on these verses: "The statement that death fears Govinda means that Krsna rescues the living entities from the hands of death. The name Gopijanavallabha means Krsna, who is very dear to *the gopis*. **By** knowing Krsna the entire spiritual and material worlds become known."

"The four Kumaras were not yet satisfied for they wished to have a more elaborate description of Krsna's transcendental qualities. So they asked Lord Brahma, 'Who is Krsna? Who is Govinda? Who is Gopijanavallabha? What is *svaha*?' "

"Brahma replied, 'Krsna means He who delivers one from sin. Govinda means He who is famous on the earth, in the *Vedas*, and among the *surabhi* cows. Gopijanavallabha means He who enchants the *gopis*. *Svaha* means the potency of the Supreme. All these names refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.' " (GU)

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura further explains, "The name *papa-karsana* (which Brahma used to describe Krsna) conveys two ideas: 1) Krsna—whose transcendental pastimes attract the minds of even the sinful, conditioned souls. 2) Krsna—the merciful Supreme Person who liberated Putana, Agha, Kesi, and the other demons He killed.

"The name Govinda means the Supreme Lord who is famous among the *surabhi* cows of Vraja. Govinda is glorified in the verses of the *Vedas*, and He is famous on the earth because He removed the burden of demoniac kings. Govinda also means He who protects the cows, land and *Vedas*. Govinda is the supreme protector who rescues the living entities from the cruel hands of death.

"Gopijanavallabha means He who enraptures the *gopis*, who are all manifestations of His *hiadini-sakti*. Gopijanavallabha enchants the *gopis* with His sweet beauty and other transcendental qualities. He removes their materialism, and gives them ecstatic love for Him. Thus He has become very dear (*yallabha*) to them.

"The word "*svaha*" means the Lord's potency by which everything is manifested." (*Sri Gopala-tapani-vivrtti*)

In the preceding commentary, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has shown the significance of each word of the Gopala-mantra, and how the *mantra* itself is a complete means to cultivate *Krsna-prema*. He says the word *krsnaya* denotes Madana-mohana, the merciful Deity of *sambandha-tattva* who establishes our eternal relationship with Krsna. Govindaji, as the abode of *abhidheya-tattva*, inspires, enthuses and accepts our devotional service. The ultimate goal (*prayojana*) of *bhakti* is the pure loving service of Gopinatha, also known as Gopijanavallabha, the darling beloved who pleases all the *vraja-gopis*.

The syllable *Sva* denotes the knower of the inner self, and the syllable *ha* means to offer or to give. The word *svaha* generally refers to offering oblations to the wife of Agnideva in *zyajna*. In the Gopala-mantra, however, *svaha* means, 'I am a servant of the *gopis*.' In other words, 'I want to give everything I have to Krsna just as the *gopis* are doing.'

"The Kumaras further asked Lord Brahma, 'What is Krsna's form? How is He glorified? How is He worshiped?' Brahmaji answered them with verses suitable for *mantra upasana*. 'You should meditate with all your heart and soul on Sri Krsna. His eyes are beautiful lotus flowers, His complexion is a glistening monsoon cloud. His garments are lightning, and He has two arms. Sri Krsna is full of transcendental knowledge. He wears a garland of forest flowers, and He is the supreme controller. Krsna is surrounded by *gopas*, *gopis* and *surabhi* cows, and resting under a *kadamba* tree. Decorated with splendid ornaments. He stands in the middle of a red lotus flower while being served by breezes cooled by the touch of Kalindi's waves. By this meditation you will become free from repeated birth and death.' " (GU)

Finally Brahma instructed the Kumaras to repeatedly chant the eighteen-syllable Gopala-mantra. Anyone who purely chants this *mantra* even once will quickly attain Krsna's blissful association.

Meaning of Gopala-mantra

"I offer oblations unto Lord Krsna, who is Govinda the lover of the *gopis*."

While chanting the *Gopala-mantra*, absorb the mind and heart in the following meditations:

- 1) "I worship Govinda, whose beautiful complexion resembles a fully blossomed blue lotus. He has a moonlike face, and is very fond of wearing a peacock feather in His hair. He bears the golden *srivatsa* line of hairs on His chest along with the splendid *kaustubha* gem. Wearing yellow cloth, Krsna is indescribably beautiful. The *gopis* worship His body with their lotus eyes. He is adorned with celestial ornaments and surrounded by the cows and His *gopa* friends. He loves to play his sweet sounding flute." (*Gautamiya-tantra*)
- 2) "Meditate on Krsna going out behind the cows *forgo-carana lila*. The honey-sweet sound of Krsna's flute is dancing through the air. Being attracted, the *vraja gopis* hide in the *kunjas* along the pathway. Some curious innocent deer also join them. With their side-long glances the *gopis* bid farewell to Krsna and communicate their hearts desire to meet later on."
- 3) "Krsna is standing under the rays of the full moon on the banks of the Yamuna. With His enchanting flute music He is attracting all the beautiful doe-eyed *gopis* to come join Him for a *rasa* dance. In the same way, the sweet and beautiful features of Syamasundara should attract me. In my *sadhaka-mpa* all of my senses should be attracted to Govindaji."

Some *acaryas* indicate that a *sadhaka* should meditate on Sri Radha while chanting the *Gopala-mantra*, because this *mantra* directly refers to Her. *Krsnaya* means Krsna is attracting Radhika, The word *govindaya* refers to Krsna who is called Govinda because Srimati Radhika pleases all of His senses. Krsna's five senses are always absorbed in Sri Radha's form, taste, sound, touch, and smell.

The word *govindaya* can also mean that Govinda is pleasing all of Radhika's senses. Srila Krsna dasa Kaviraja explains how Govinda pleases the senses of His beloved *gopis*: "One day Sri Radha said to Visakha, 'O my dear friend! Syama enchants the eyes, and inundates the

mountain-like minds of the *vraja gopis* with the ocean of His nectarean beauty. He gives joy to their ears with His pleasant joking words. He pleases the sense of touch with His body, which is cooler than millions of moons. Syamasundara fills the world with His ambrosial fragrance and with the nectar of His lips. In this way He forcibly attracts all My five senses.' " {*Govinda-lilamrta*)

The word *gopijanavallabha* means that Gopijanavallabha (Krsna) is Radhika's lover.

How to Chant Gopala-mantra

In the *Bhakti Sandarbha*, Srila Jiva Gosvami says that while meditating on the *mantra* some devotees conceive of the various emotions one experiences upon being attracted to Krsna's flute at the time of milking the cows. Other devotees may meditate thus: "Although I myself am personally residing in Vraja, I am so unfortunate that I am deprived of the direct worship of Radha and Krsna. Sri Gurudeva, therefore, has instructed me in this Gopala-mantra. And as a result, my devotional aspirations have reached perfection, and now I am personally rendering service to Sri Vrajendranandana."

In one sense chanting the Gopala-mantra is useless if one does not receive the *darsana* of Krsna in his meditation. One should chant with a heart full of eagerness, "When will that day come? When will I see Radhika and Syama in my heart of hearts?" Mindless, mechanical chanting will not help. If one chants from the heart, the *mantra* will bestow His direct *darsana*. One will not get the full result of the *mantra* if he is sleepy, inattentive, discouraged, or in anxiety while chanting.

Giridhari will appear before us, or as Srila Prabhupada used to say, "We will see Krsna dancing on the tip of our tongues." This will definitely happen by chanting exactly according to the *guru's* instructions. Chanting the *mantra* with firm faith, humility, exclusive sentiment, tear-filled eyes, and a steady, concentrated mind devoid of all desires for sense gratification will give one direct *darsana* of Krsna Himself.

Benefits of Gopala-mantra

Of the many Visnu *mantras* giving liberation, the Gopala-mantra (*Kisna-mantra*) is the best because it invokes *Krsna-prema* upon its chanter and reveals Krsna's Vrndavana *lila*. By chanting the Gopala-mantra, the *mantra-rajā* (king of *mantras*), one propitiates Radha-Govinda in *madhurya-rasa*.

"Do execute penance while contemplating upon this *mantra*, and you will attain to all perfection." (BS v. 25)

The Gopala-mantra has the power to gratify any desire the chanter may possess. When Divya Sarasvati gave the Gopala-mantra to Lord Brahma, she told him it would fulfill all his desires. The *Brhad-bhagavatamrta* describes how the young cowherd boy Gopa-kumara satisfied his desires one after another by continually chanting the ten-syllable Gopala-mantra. His chanting of the Gopala-mantra carried him throughout universe and placed him in various positions of mastership. Finally it awarded him the perfection of Sri Krsna's eternal loving embrace which he sought for so long.

Srila Vyasadeva said, "The ten-syllable Gopala-mantra is the highest *mantra*. This *mantra* stops *samsara*, dispels sins and ignorance, gives victory in battles, fearlessness in forests, and safety in floods. It gives wealth and all types of prosperity to the devotees. The Gopala-mantra bestows strength, vigor, heroic valor, a beautiful celestial body, and the eight mystic powers. This *mantra* increases *bhakti* to the lotus feet of Sri Krsna. Narada Muni is the *rsi* of the Gopala-mantra, which is chanted in the *virat-chanda*. Sri Krsna, the son of Nanda Maharaja and the benefactor of the whole world, is the *mantra devata*." (NP)

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu achieved *darsana* of Krsna through chanting the Gopala-mantra. He saw a gorgeous young boy standing in a three-fold bending form playing on a flute. His hair was crested with a peacock feather, His belly was marked with three lines, and His voice was sweet. Overwhelmed in ecstatic love, Mahaprabhu ran after that mischievous boy who disappeared within a forest bower. Collapsing on the ground, Mahaprabhu began rolling about and crying out in intense separation, "O Krsna! Where are You? Where are You?"

InRaga-vartma-candrika, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura explains that as an item of *bhajana*, chanting the Gopala-mantra is *bhdva sambandhi*, or related to the desired feeling, and thus acts as a direct cause for attaining the goal of *Krsna-prema*.

"A person of disciplined mind who chants the Gopala-mantra day and night will definitely see the Lord in His *gopa* form." (*Gautamiya-tantra*)

Gopala-mantra and Chanting Hare Krsna

In summary, one sees that in Treta-yuga the Dandakaranya sages attained *sambandha-jnana* and then realized their *sthaiyī-bhava* (permanent devotional sentiment) by chanting the Gopala-mantra. They reached the limit of this world, and in their next lives by the arrangement of Yogamaya they took birth from the wombs of *gopis* in Bhauma Vrndavana. At this stage of *svarupa siddhi* there is no more need of chanting the Gopala-mantra. By directly associating with Gopal Himself and His eternal associates like the *gopis*, and by hearing and chanting about His pastimes they attained *vastu-siddhi*, and entered Krsna's eternal pastimes in Goloka Vrndavana. The Gopala-mantra is needed in the stage of *sadhana* but not in the stage of perfection.

Gopala-mantra and Kama-gayatri help the *sadhaka* to chant *suddha-nama*, the pure name of Krsna. Chanting these *mantras* brings *sambandha-jnana*, the feeling of a particular sentiment or *bhava*, and finally manifests one's eternal *svarupa*. All further purification, realizations, and refinement of sentiments will arise from absorption in *nama-sankirtana*, which is done both in the stage of *sadhana* and forever in the stage of perfection.

Realized souls will no longer chant Gopala-mantra, but they will continue to relish *nama-sankirtana*. In Vraja Dhama even Radhika and Syama regularly perform ecstatic *nama-sankirtana*. Conditioned souls must chant *nama-sankirtana* along with Gopala-mantra, Gaura-gayatri, Kama-gayatri, and all the other *gum-given mantras*. These additional *mantras* quickly dissolve material attachments, and help one realize his spiritual identity and relationship with Krsna (*sambandha-jnana*).

In *Brhad-bhagavatamrta*, Srila Sanatana Gosvami concludes that *nama-sankirtana* is the best and most powerful method for attaining *vraja-prema* of Radha and Krsna because it powerfully

draws Krsna toward the devotee. While engaged in *nama-sankirtana* one should chant with deep feeling, full faith, firm determination, and the realization that Radha-Syamasundara are personally present in the *maha-mantra* with all Their transcendental beauty, qualities, and pastimes. Such performance of *nama-sankirtana* will surely bring the desired result of *Krsna-prema*.

Lord Caitanya and Gopala-mantra

"While visiting Gaya on pilgrimage, Lord Caitanya met Isvara Puri in a secluded place and asked for *mantra-diksa*. Isvara Puri replied, 'Why do You ask me for *mantra-diksa*? It is I who should surrender my life to You.'

"Then Lord Caitanya, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the *siksa-guru* of everyone, accepted initiation into the ten-syllable Gopala-mantra. After circumambulating Isvara Puri, Lord Caitanya said, 'Now I give My body to you. Please cast your merciful glance upon Me, so I may drown in the ocean of *Krsna-prema*.'

"Isvara Puri responded by tightly embracing the Lord. Overwhelmed with ecstasy, they trembled and tears of love streamed from their eyes drenching their bodies. In this way Lord Caitanya, who is Lord Hari with a golden complexion, gave His mercy to Isvara Puri during His brief stay in Gaya." (CBAdi ch. 17)

Chapter Seven

KAMA GAYATRI

Identity

A disciple generally receives the Kama-gayatri from his spiritual master after having advanced in spiritual knowledge and in chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*. The Gopala-mantra acts as a *mula-mantra* for doing *puja* and for chanting the Kama-gayatri. Being the sequel to the Gopala-mantra, the Kama-gayatri is the full manifestation of that *mantra*, and the embodiment of the three *Vedas*.

"Lord Krsna is worshiped by the Gayatri *mantra*, and the specific *mantra* by which He is worshiped is called Kama-gayatri. The Kama-gayatri is composed of 24^{1/2} syllables. This Kama-gayatri is received from the spiritual master when the disciple is advanced in chanting Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

"In other words, this Kama-gayatri and *samskara*, or reformation of a perfect *brahmana*, are offered by the spiritual master when he sees that his disciple is advanced in spiritual knowledge. Even then, the Kama-gayatri is not uttered under certain circumstances. In any case, the chanting of Hare Krsna is sufficient to elevate one to the highest spiritual platform." (TLC ch.31)

The Kama-gayatri refers to the Lord *oiprema*, and it leads to full realization of the transcendental pastimes of Gopijanavallabha. It is the best of all *gayatris* because it reveals the most intimate joyful pastimes of Krsna, which are not revealed in any other *gayatri*. It is a meditation upon the Supreme Lord in His ultimate aspect as Krsna with a specific name, form, qualities, and pastimes. Kama-gayatri, which represents the fifth note of Krsna's flute, impels the devotee toward Krsna in Goloka with the experience of *madhurya-rasa*. Krsna attracts all living entities with the eight notes of His flute. The fifth note, which expresses Krsna's love, is especially for the *gopis*.

InJaiva Dharma, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura quotes the *Srsti-khanda* of the *Padma Purana* to explain the esoteric appearance of Kama-gayatri. He says that Gayatri first appeared as the mother of the *Vedas*. Hearing how all the *Upanisads* once took birth as *vraja-gopis*, Gayatri began executing intense devotional meditations. Finally both Gayatri and the *Gopala-tapani Upanisad* took birth as *gopis*. After entering Krsna's conjugal pastimes Gayatri assumed the form of Kama-gayatri, the topmost of all Gayatris. Thus, the Kama-gayatri, which is eternal, manifests by a pastime.

History of Brahma's Enlightenment

When Garbhodakasayi Visnu desired to recreate the universe, a divine golden lotus flower grew from His navel, and Lord Brahma appeared from that lotus. Therefore Brahma is known as *atma-bhu* or *svayambhu* (self-born). Bewildered about his purpose. Lord Brahma entered the water below the lotus flower upon which he was sitting. Hearing the word "*tapa*" (which means austerities) vibrated twice, Brahma returned to his lotus flower seat and performed penances.

"On coming out of the lotus, Brahma, being guided by the divine potency, turned his mind to the act of creation under the impulse of previous impressions. But he could see nothing but darkness in every direction." (BS v. 23)

After sometime, Lord Sri Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appeared to Brahma and spoke the four nutshell verses of the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (cited in SB 2.9.33-36), which present essential knowledge about the Personality of Godhead. Later Brahma received the Gopala-mantra from Divya Sarasvati, the eternal consort of Lord Narayana.

*uvaca puratas tasmai tasya divya sarasvati kdma'krsnaya govinda
he gopi'jana ity api vallabhaya priyd vahner mantram te ddsyati
priyam*

"Then the goddess of learning Sarasvati, the divine consort of the Supreme Lord, said thus to Brahma, who saw nothing but gloom in all directions, 'O Brahma, this *mantra*, viz., *kllm krsndya govindya gopl-jana-vallabhaya svdhd*, will assuredly fulfill your heart's desire." (BS v. 24)

Divya Sarasvati, distinct from Sarasvati, the wife of Lord Brahma, is a divine spiritual goddess, an expansion of Radharani, Krsna's internal energy. She advised Brahma to practice austerity for the fulfillment of his innermost desire: *tapas tvam tapa etend, tava siddhir bhavisyati*, "O

Brahma, do thou practice spiritual association by means of this *mantra*; then all your desires will be fulfilled." (BS v. 25)

Lord Brahma became a Vaisnava upon receiving the Gopala-mantra. His *tapasya* was chanting and meditating upon the Gopala-mantra. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura translates the word *tapasya* as "spiritual association." By chanting the Gopala-mantra, which is non-different from Lord Krsna, Lord Brahma's "austerity" awarded him the direct association of the Supreme Lord. Brahma was an ideal disciple. Therefore upon receiving the *mantra*, he dutifully chanted it with full faith, fixed concentration and without hesitation.

In the above mentioned verse (text 25), Divya Sarasvati uses the Sanskrit word *siddhi*, which means "fulfillment." The Gopala-mantra can act in two ways: 1) materially to satisfy desires such as Brahma's desire to create; 2) spiritually to satisfy the desire for pure love of God and Krsna's eternal service in Vraja-dhama. "Brahmajiva was initiated into the Gopala-mantra and thus became a Vaisnava, devotee of the Lord, before he was able to construct the huge universe." (SB 2.9.6. p.)

Brahma continued his penance of chanting the Gopala-mantra and of meditating upon a vision of Krsna in Vraja, standing beside Srimati Radhika, and playing His flute in the company of thousands of beautiful *gopis*.

"Desiring to attain the mercy of Govinda, Brahma started practicing the cultural acts to please Sri Krsna in Goloka. Brahma meditated like this: 'In the transcendental land of Goloka, which is made of wish-fulfilling gems, is a thousand petaled lotus flower that blooms with millions of filaments. Sri Krsna, the effulgent embodiment of divine loving ecstasy, is seated upon a golden throne in the center of that lotus. Pressing His flute to His lotus mouth, Krsna makes a most beautiful transcendental sound. He is surrounded by His amorous *gopis* who are worshiping Him and singing His glories. Their *gopi* associates, who are their respected personal expansions, assist the *gopis*. Krsna is also worshiped from outside by His external energy, *may a*, who is the embodiment of the material qualities (three modes of nature).'" (BS v. 26)

Here *Brahma-samhita* says that Brahma was performing "cultural acts for Krsna in Goloka." What were these cultural acts? The *acaryas* explain that Lord Brahma was performing *raganuga sadhana bhakti*. While envisioning himself to be a maidservant (*manjari*) of the *gopis*. Lord Brahma was chanting the Gopala-mantra and performing "cultural acts"—the sixty-four arts described in *Brahma-samhita*.

"The sixty-four activities in fine arts and crafts are the following:

(1) *gita*—art of singing, composing songs, and articulating different melodies, notes, accents and meters. (2) *vadya*—art of playing on the four types of musical instruments (wind, strings, percussion, metallic cymbals). (3) *nrtya*—art of dancing and moving the limbs in various symbolic expressions. It includes dancing with different rhythms, songs and melodies. (4) *ndya*—art of writing theatrical dramas. (5) *alekhyā*—art of drawing, calligraphy and painting pictures. It includes all forms from simple village arts up to the highest perfectional stage of masterful painting. (6) *visesakacchedya*—art of painting the face and body with various dots and designs of colored unguents and cosmetics. (7) *tandula-kusuma-ball-vikdra*—art of preparing auspicious offerings for worship with rice and flowers. It includes making paintings on the floor or ground with liquid paste of rice flour, (8) *puspdstarana*—art of making

comfortable resting places by spreading flowers on the ground. (9) *dasana-vasandnga-rdga*—art of coloring teeth, clothing and bodily limbs with cosmetics like saffron. (10) *mani-bhumikd-kanna*—art of inlaying floors, courtyards and pathways with colorful mosaics of precious jewels. (II) *sayyd-racana*—art of preparing different types of beds^ complete with carpets, cushions, pillows, cloth coverings and decorations like tassels. (12) *udaka-vddya*—art of making music in water. The cupped palms splash downward to produce the thumping sound of kettledrums, or the hand splashes sideways back and forth to simulate cymbals. Sometimes this art is said to be playing different pots filled with varying levels of water to produce melodious tunes. (13) *udaka-ghdta*—art of splashing with water, and storing water in cisterns and reservoirs. (14) *citra-yoga*—art of trimming, decorating and hanging pictures. (15) *mdlya-grathana-vikalpa*—art of stringing necklaces and weaving flower garlands for various uses. (16) *sekhardpida-yojana*—art of setting a crown upon the head, including turbans, and top-knots of flowers. (17) *nepathya-yoga*—art of putting on costumes in the dressing room for theatrical performances. Includes scenic stage arrangements. (18) *kamapdtra-bhanga*—art of decorating eariobe with flower or leaf-ornaments, and painting ornamental figures. (19) *sugandha-yukti*—art of preparing and applying aromatics and perfumed cosmetics of various kinds. Includes sprinkling sandalwood pulp and water to produce a nice fragrance. (20) *bhusana-yojana*—art of beautifying the body and limbs with specialized types of ornaments and jewelry. (21) *indra-jala*—art of presenting stage music, illusions and jugglery. (22) *kauchundra-yogd*—art of appearing in various disguises. (23) *hasta-ldghava*—art of sleight of hand. (24) *citra-sdkdpupa-bhaksya-vikdra-kriyd*—art of preparing varieties of salad, bread, cake and delicious food. (25) *pdnaka-rasa-rdgsava-yojana*—art of preparing nectar drinks and tinging draughts with red color. (26) *suci-vdya-karma*—art of needleworks, weaving, embroidery and tailoring. (27) *sutra-kndd*—art of manipulating puppets with strings. (28) *vmd-damuraka-vddya*—art of playing on lute and small x-shaped drum. (29) *prahehkd*—art of making and solving riddles. (29-a) *pratimald*—art of reciting verse for verse as a trial for memory or skill. (30) *durvacaka-yoga*—art of skillfully uttering tongue-twisters that are difficult for others to repeat. (3V) *pustaka-vdcana*—art of clearly and quickly reading and reciting books, including techniques of chanting and intoning. (32) *ndtikdkhydykd-darsana*—art of enacting short plays and anecdotes. (33) *kdvyasamasyd-purana*—art of completing verses after hearing only three lines. Includes solving crossword and various puzzles. This is usually played at the risk of losing a stake or paying a penalty. (34) *pattikd-vetra-bdna-vikalpa*—art of manufacturing armaments such as shield, staffs, bows and arrows. (35) *tarku-karma*—art of making thread with a spinning wheel. (36) *taksana*—art of wood-cutting and carpentry. (37) *vdstu-vidyd*—art of architecture and engineering. (38) *raupya-ratna-pariksd*—art of testing the authenticity of silver and jewels. (39) *dhdtu-vdda*—art of metallurgy and alchemy. (40) *mani-rdga jfidna*—art of using dyes to alter the color of precious gemstones. (41) *dkara jfidna*—art of mineralogy. (42) *vrksdyur-veda-yoga*—art of gardening and crossbreeding plants and trees for the purpose of obtaining Ayur Vedic medicines. (43) *mesa-kukkuta-Idvaka-yuddha-vssidhi*—art of training rams, cocks, and grouse to fight for sport. (44) *suka-sdrikd-prapalana (praldpana)*—art of teaching male and female parrots to speak and hold conversations with people. (45) *utsddana*—art of skin care. Includes cleaning the skin with perfumed lotions, and using ointments for healing. (46) *kesa-mdrjana-kausala*—art of expertly arranging the hair, including coloring and curling it in various ways. (47) *aksara-mustikd-kathana*—art of speaking silently with sign language. (48) *miecchita-kutarka-vikalpa*—art of fabricating languages spoken in the indistinct ungrammatical manner of barbarians. (49) *desa-bhdsd-jndna*—art of knowing provincial dialects. (50) *puspa-sakatikd-nirmitti-jndna*—knowledge of building miniature carts with flowers. (51) *yantra-mdtrkd*—science of drawing mystical diagrams for worship or for projecting powers. (52) *dhdrana-mdtrkd*—art of preparing potent amulets worn for protection

or other purposes. (53) *samvdcya*—art of conversation. Sometimes called *sampdtyam*—art of splitting hard substances such as diamonds into smaller pieces (54) *mdnasi kdvyā-kriyā*—art of composing poetry within the mind. (55) *kriyā-vikalpa*—art of designing the performance of rites and ceremonial functions. Also the art of good management, that of accomplishing many things at once. Includes fortelling events by studying omens. (56) *chalitaka-yoga*—art of playing tricks and practical jokes. (57) *abhidhna-kosa-cchando-jndna*—art of use dictionaries, word-usage, poetic meters, and lexicography. (58) *vastra-gopana*—art of concealing the true nature of cloth, making it appear as made of a different or superior texture. For example, one may make coarse cotton appear as silk. (59) *dyuta-visesa*—art of knowing specific forms of gambling. (60) *dkarsa-kndd*—art of playing with magnet and magnetic phenomena. Includes hypnotism and the power of attracting others. (61) *bdlaka-kndanaka*—art of playing children's games. (62) *vaindyiki vidyā*—art of enforcing discipline by employing mystical charms. Includes understanding another's psychic movements in order to influence their mind and induce them to act according to one's own wishes. (63) *vaijayiki vidyā*—art of gaining victory. (64) *vaitdliki vidyā*—knowledge of artfully reciting the glories of great personalities. Includes knowing how to properly offer respects and compliments to others.

"All these arts manifesting their own eternal forms are ever visible in the region of Goloka as the ingredients of *rasa*; and, in the mundane sphere, they have been unstintedly exhibited in the pastimes of Vraja by the spiritual (*cit*) potency, Yogamaya. " (BS v.37 p.)

Although Lord Brahma was thus meditating while chanting the Gopala-mantra, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura concludes that Brahma's devotion was not pure unalloyed *bhakti*, How is this possible? Brahma's devotion was *gauna-bhakti*, an indirect practice of devotional service that nourishes the growth of pure devotion to the Lord. Brahma's devotion to the Lord was mixed with his personal desire to create the material world, therefore, it cannot be accepted as pure, unalloyed devotional service.

Satisfied with Brahma's austerities, Lord Narayana manifested His personal abode of Vaikuntha to him. From his lotus flower Brahma could see Lord Narayana, His eternal associates, and all the variegatedness of the Vaikuntha planets. Feeling pleased with Brahma, Lord Narayana then shook hands with him to confirm that Brahma was now qualified to create living beings. At this time, Brahma received complete Vedic knowledge from Lord Narayana. Srila Prabhupada said that in the beginning stages of self-realization, Lord Brahma was shown a transcendental vision of the Vaikuntha spheres by the grace of Lord Narayana.

After a thousand celestial years of meditation upon the Gopala-mantra, Lord Brahma was fortunate enough to hear the sweet sound of Govinda's transcendental flute and attain perception of Kṛṣṇa and His holy *dharma*. The flute sound took the form of the Gayatri *mantra*.

*atha venu'ninddasya trayi'murti'mayi gatih sphuranti
pravivesdsu •mukhabjani svayambhuvah gdyatrvm gdyatas tasmad
adhigacya sarojajah samskratas cadi-gurund dvijatdm agamat Utah*

"Then Gayatri, mother of the *Vedas*, being made manifest, i.e. imparted by the divine sound of the flute of Sri Kṛṣṇa, entered into the lotus mouth of Brahma, born from himself, through his eight ear-holes. The lotus-born Brahma, having received the Gayatri sprung from the flute-song of Sri Kṛṣṇa, attained the status of the twice-born, having been initiated by the supreme primal preceptor. Godhead Himself." (BS v.27)

Lord Brahma was initiated directly by Lord Kṛṣṇa through the sound of His flute. At that time Gayatri entered Brahma's ears, and he became twice born. This verse explains how Lord Brahma heard the divine sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute through his eight ear-holes.

The sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute is the most blissful musical vibration in existence, and hence the poetic Gayatri meter is present within it. The joyful sound of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental flute entered Brahma's heart and issued forth from his lotus mouth. Brahmaji attained the status of being twice born only after his initiation by the Lord. Although born directly from Viṣṇu Himself, Brahma's exalted birth did not automatically make him a *brahmana*. Therefore no one can claim *brahminical* status simply on the basis of family lineage.

Through hearing Sri Kṛṣṇa's flute song, Lord Brahma simultaneously received the Brahma-gayatri, which gave him the status of a twice born *brahmana*, and the Kama-gayatri. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī Thākura says that the Brahma-gayatri is a Vedic rhythm that contains a brief meditation and prayer. The Kama-gayatri, however, is the highest of all the Gayatris because it denotes the perfect transcendental sportive activities of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopis* in Vraja-dhama, a meditation not found in any other Gayatri.

Chanting the Kama-gayatri helps one attain pure love for Gopījanavallabha and realizations of His blissful transcendental pastimes. Unlike the Brahma-gayatri, which is chanted without exception by all classes of *brahmanas*, the Kama-gayatri is specifically chanted by members of the Gauḍīya sampradāya.

*trayya prabuddho 'tha vidhir vijśdta'tattva'sdgarah tustdva
veda'sdrem stotrendnena kesavam*

"Enlightened by the recollection of that Gayatri, embodying the three *Vedas*, Brahma became acquainted with the expanse of the ocean of truth. Then he worshiped Sri Kṛṣṇa, the essence of all *Vedas*, with this hymn." (BS v. 28)

This verse indicates that by Gayatri meditation Lord Brahma became purified and elevated to the *madhyama* level. In the beginning of his meditation Brahma had to deal with his previous interest for creation, therefore Sarasvatī gave him the Gopāla-mantra which, according to the *Brahma-saṁhita*, he dutifully chanted from "a distance of *mayadevī*." Lord Brahma advanced spiritually by chanting the Gopāla-mantra because he was following *sādhana bhakti* with a desire to create in order to please Lord Kṛṣṇa.

As a *madhyama bhakta* Lord Brahma attained the platform of *nistha*. Brahma's constant chanting gave him a vague idea about his spiritual form as a maidservant, but no details were revealed. *Ācāryas* say the details of one's spiritual identity and the revelation of *svārūpa* occur at the juncture of *asakti* and *bhava*.

In the purport to the *Brahma-saṁhita* v. 28, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī Thākura says, "Enlightened by meditating upon the Kama-gayatri, Lord Brahma became acquainted with the ocean of truth. Although Brahma did not receive all the details of his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, by chanting the Kama-gayatri he could understand his *svārūpa-siddhi*, actual spiritual form as a maidservant."

"In the beginning of Lord Brahma's self-realization he was shown a transcendental vision of the Vaikuntha spheres by the grace of Narayana. Later, by the grace of Krsna, he was shown a transcendental vision of Krsnaloka. This transcendental vision is achieved by penance and meditation within oneself." (*Cc.Adi5.22p.*)

Inspired by his sublime realizations, Lord Brahma then began to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna, who is the essence of the *Vedas*, with his famous "Govindam Prayers" that begin with—*cintamani prakara sadmasu kalpa vrksa*. In the *Brahma-samhita* verses 29-55, Brahma describes everything he saw while in a meditative trance known as *svarasiki* (the spontaneous outflow of the heart's spiritual love for Krsna, which reveals variegated pastimes performed in different moods and planes). According to Sri Jiva Gosvami, *Brahma-samhita* verses 30,31, and 56 are vivid examples of Brahmaji's *svarasiki* realization. Brahma's vision of the spiritual world compares with the following description given by Svarupa Damodara Gosvami during the Hera-pancami festival in Jagannatha Puri:

Sri Vrndavana Dhama

*mho ddamodara'svarupa-suddha'vrajavdsI aisvarya nd jane mho
suddha'preme bhdsi*

"Svarupa Damodara is a pure devotee of Vrndavana. He does not even know what opulence is, for he is simply absorbed in pure devotional service."

*svarupa J<ahe,—Slivdsa, suna sdvadhane vmddvana-sampad tomdra
ndhi pade mane⁷*

Svarupa Damodara then retorted, "My dear Srivasa, please hear me with attention. You have forgotten the transcendental opulence of Vrndavana.

*vrnddvane sdhajika ye sampat'sindhu dvdrakd-vaikuntha'sampat-
tdra eka bindu*

"The natural opulence of Vrndavana is just like an ocean. The opulence of Dvaraka and Vaikuntha is not even to be compared to a drop.

*parama purusottama svayam bhagavdn krsna ydhdn dhani tdhdn
vrnddvana'dhdma*

"Sri Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead full of all opulences, and His complete opulences are exhibited only in Vrndavana-dhama.

*dntdmani'maya bhumi ratnera bhavana dntdmani'gana
ddsI'carana'bhusana*

"Vrndavana-dhama is made of transcendental touchstone. Its entire surface is the source of all valuable jewels, and the *cintamani* stone is used to decorate the lotus feet of the maidservants of Vrndavana.

*kalpavrksa-latdra-ydhdn sdhajika'vana puspa'phala vind keha nd
mage anya dhana*

"Vrindavana is a natural forest of desire trees and creepers, and the inhabitants do not want anything but the fruits and flowers of those desire trees.

*ananta kdma'dhenu tdhdn phire vane vane dugdha-mdtra dena, keha
nd mage anya dhane*

"In Vrindavana there are cows that fulfill all desires (*kama-dhenus*), and their number is unlimited. They graze from forest to forest and deliver only milk. The people want nothing else.

*sahaja lokera kathd-ydhdn divya'gitol,
sahaja gamana kare,-y cliche nrtya'pra.tJ.ta '*

"In Vrindavana, the natural speech of the people sounds like music, and their natural motion resembles a dance.

*sarvatra jala-ydhdn amrta'samdna dd-anondo, jyotih svddya.-
ydhdn murtimdn*

"The water in Vrindavana is nectar, and the *brahmajyoti* effulgence, which is full of transcendental bliss, is directly perceived there in its form.

*laksmi jini' guna ydhdn Iflksmirfl samaJa krsna'vamsl kare
ydhdn priya'sakhi'kdya*

"*Thegopis* there are also goddesses of fortune, and they surpass the goddess of fortune who abides in Vaikuntha. In Vrindavana, Lord Krsna is always playing His transcendental flute, which is His dear companion.

*dntdmanis carana'bhusanam angandndm
srngdra'puspa-taravas taravah surdnam vrnddvane vraja-dhanam
nanu kdma'dhenu'
vrnddni ceti sukha'sindhur aho vibhutih*

"The anklets on the damsels of Vraja-bhumi are made of *cintdmani* stone. The trees are wish-fulfilling trees, and they produce flowers with which the *gopis* decorate themselves. There are also wish-fulfilling cows (*kdma dhenus*), which deliver unlimited quantities of milk. These cows constitute the wealth of Vrindavana. Thus Vrindavana's opulence is blissfully exhibited.' (Cc. *Madhya* 14.217-229)

Brahma-samhita Prayers of Brahma

*dntdmani'prakara--sadmasu kalpa-vrksa' laksdvrtesu surabhir
abhipalayantam laksmi-sahasra'sata-sambhrama'sevyamdnam
govindam ddi'purusam tarn aham bhajdrd*

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, the first progenitor, who is tending cows yielding all desires among abodes built with spiritual gems, and who is surrounded by millions of desire trees. He is always served with great reverence and affection by hundreds of thousands of *laksmis*, or *gopis*." (BS v, 29)

*venum kvanantam aravinda'daldyatdksam
barhvatamsam asitdmbuda'sundardngam:
kandarpa'koti'kamaniya'visesa'sobharh
govindam ddi'purusam tarn aham bhajdmi*

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is adept at playing on His flute, who has Byes like the petals of a blooming lotus, whose head is bedecked with a peacock feather, who has a figure of beauty tinged with the hue of blue clouds, and whose unique loveliness is charming millions of Cupids." (BS v. 30)

*diola'candraka'lasad'vanamdiya'vamsl'
ratndngadam pranaya'keli'kald'vildsam sydmam tri'bhanga'lalitam
niyata'prakdsam
govindam ddi'purusam tarn aham bhajdmi*

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, around whose neck is swinging a garland of flowers beautified with the moon-locket. His two hands are adorned with the flute and jeweled ornaments, He always revels in pastimes of love, and His graceful threefold-bending form of Syamasundara is eternally manifest." (BS v. 31)

*angdni yasya sakalendriya'vrtti'manti pasyanti pdnti kalayanti
dram jaganti dnanda'cinmaya'sad'ujjvala'vighrahasya govindam
ddi'purusam tarn aham bhajdmi*

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who eternally sees, maintains, and manifests the infinite universes, both spiritual and mundane. His transcendental form is full of bliss, truth, and substantiality and is thus full of the most dazzling splendor. Each of the limbs of that transcendental figure possesses in itself the full-fledged functions of all the organs." (BS v. 32)

*advaitam acyutam anddim ananta'rupam
ddyam purdna'purusam nava'yauvanam ca vedesu durlabham
adurlabham dtma'bhaktau
govindam ddi'purusam tarn aham bhajdmi*

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is inaccessible to the *Vedas*, but who is obtainable by pure unalloyed devotion of the soul. He is one without a second, not subject to decay, and without a beginning. His form is endless, and He is the beginning of all. Though the eternal, ancient *purusa*, He is a person possessing the beauty of blooming youth." (BS v. 33)

*dnanda'cinmaya'rasa'pratibhdivitdbhh'
tdbhir ya eva rdja'rupatayd kaldbhih goloka eva nivasaty
akhildtma'bhuto
govindam ddi'purusam tarn aham bhajdmi*

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who, while residing in everyone's heart as the Supersoul, also resides in His own realm, Goloka, with Radha, who resembles His own spiritual figure and who embodies the ecstatic potency of *hiadini*. Their companions are Her confidantes, who are extensions of Her bodily form and who are permeated with ever-blissful, spiritual *rasa*." (BS v. 37)

*premdnjana-cchurita'bhakti'vilocanena
santah sadaiva hrdayesu vilokayanti yam syamasundaram
acintya'guna'svarupam
govindam ddi'purusam tarn aham bhajdm"*

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Syamasundara, Krsna Himself, who possesses innumerable inconceivable attributes, and whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love." (BS v. 38)

*sriyah kdntah kdntah parama'purusah kalpa'taravo
drumd bhiimis cintdmani'gana'mayi toyam amrtam kathd gdnam
ndtyam gamanam apt vamsl priya'sakhi
cid'dnandam jyotih param apt tad dsyddyam api ca sa yatra
ksirdbdhih sravau surabhibhyas ca su'mahdn
nimesdrdhdkhyo vd vrajati na hi yatrdpi samayah bhaje
svetadvlpam tarn aham iha golokam iti yam
vidantas te santah ksiti'virala'cdrdh katipaye*

"The transcendental realm of Vrndavana is completely spiritual. The *gopis* are always present there as Krsna's beloveds, and all of them have pure spiritual bodies just like Krsna. In Vrndavana, Krsna is the Supreme Person and the transcendental lover of all the *gopis*. The trees in Vrndavana are wish-fulfilling trees. The land is made of touchstone, and the water is nectar. Words are musical vibrations, and all movements are dancing. The flute is Krsna's constant companion. The planet of Goloka Vrndavana is self-luminous like the sun and is full of spiritual bliss. The perfection of life lies in tasting that spiritual existence; therefore everyone should cultivate its knowledge. In Vrndavana, spiritual cows are always supplying spiritual milk. Not a single particle of time is wasted there. In other words, there is no past, present or future. Within this material universe, the devotees worship that transcendental abode as Goloka Vrndavana. Lord Brahma himself said, "Let me worship that spiritual land where Krsna is present." (BS v. 56)

Summary of Brahma's Enlightenment

- 1) Lord Brahma received Gopala-mantra from Sarasvati and chanted it for a long time.
- 2) Lord Brahma then meditated and heard Krsna's flute. The sound of the flute initially carried the form of the Kama-gayatri, which itself embodies the essence of all the knowledge of the three *Vedas*, which include knowledge of all other Gayatri *mantras* such as Brahma-gayatri and all other spiritual processes like karma, *jnana*, and *bhakti*.
- 3) Enlightened by recollection, Lord Brahma meditated upon that Kama-gayatri. By this he learned the expanse of the ocean of truth, realized his individual relationship with the Lord, and understood the nature of Krsna's spiritual world, material world, and the various branches of Vedic knowledge. All of Lord Brahma's visions and realizations are contained in the *Brahma-samhita*.

The following verse outline from the *Brahma-samhita* shows the path of Brahma's enlightenment.

Verses 22-23—Brahma takes birth from Lord Visnu's lotus navel and desires to create the material world.

Verses 24-25—Lord Brahma receives the Kama-bija and Gopala-mantra from Krsna via Divya Sarasvati. ' Verses 26-27—Lord Brahma receives the Kama-gayatri and attains the twice-born status.

Verses 29-55—Lord Brahma offers hymns unto Sri Krsna.

Meaning of Klim

The *Upanisads* state that the universe was created from the syllable *klim*. The letter "K" represents Krsna; "L" represents Radharani; "I" represents Radha and Krsna's sweet *prema*; and "M" represents Radha and Krsna's loving embrace, or *thejivas* who follow in the footsteps of the *gopis*.

vrnddvane 'aprdkrta navina madana' kdma'gayatrI kdma'blje ydnra updsana

"In the spiritual realm of Vrndavana, Krsna is the spiritual, ever-fresh Cupid. He is worshiped by the chanting of the Kama-gayatri *mantra* with the spiritual seed *klim*. (Cc. *Madhya* 8.138) In the next entry, Srila Prabhupada gives another translation to this verse: "The word *klim* added to the Gayatri-mantra is explained in *Brahma-samhita* as the transcendental seed of love of Godhead, or the seed of the Kama-gayatri. The object is Krsna, who is the ever green Cupid, and by utterance of the *klim mantra* Krsna is worshiped." (TLC ch.31)

Srila Prabhodananda Sarasvati gives this illumination on the word *klim*: "The wonderful transcendental seed *mantra klim* is described in the *Gautamiya-tantra* as having five ornaments. From the syllable *klim*. Lord Brahma created the material universe. The element earth was created from the letter *L*; water arose from *K*; fire arose from *I*; air arose from *M*; ether arose from the *bindu* dot above the *M*.

"The *Brihad Gantamiya Tantra* says, "K" refers to the *purusa* known as Krsna, the Supreme aggressive male, who possesses a form embodying full eternity, knowledge, and bliss; "I" is the *prakrti* known as Radha, the Supreme receptive female. Who is eternally known as Vrndavanesvari, the most majestic Princess of Sri Vrndavana; "L" is the happiness of Their mutual ecstatic love that is the form of pure blissful joy; "M" with the *bindu* is the ecstatic sweetness of Their most blissful kiss.

"The *Sanat-kumara Samhita* states that Krsna's bodily form is identical to the *kama-bija* itself. In other words, the letters of *klim* are nondifferent from the sweet body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. "K" refers to Krsna's head, forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, and ears; "L"—cheeks, chin, jaw, teeth, neck, throat, and back; "I"—shoulders, arms, elbows, fingers, fingernails; "M"—chest, two sides, belly, and navel; the *bindu*— His thighs, knees, calves, ankles, heels, feet, toes, and toenails.

"*Klim* also represents the eight consorts of Cupid: "K" is Ratnapriya, Ratikala, Bhadra, and Saurabha; "L" is Sumukhi and Kalahamsi; "M" is Madanamada; the *bindu* is Kalapini." (KVV)

The following *sastric* quotations explain the amazing potency of the seed *mantra klim*. Although Prabhodananda Sarasvati describes many transcendental visions that manifest from the *bija* syllable *klim*, such repetition is faultless for its sole purpose is to glorify Radha and Krsna. Afterall, a *rasagulla* is always refreshingly sweet and pleasing no matter how many times it is taken.

"In the forest of Vrndavana, which is filled with splendid bliss emanating from the *bija* syllable of the Kama-gayatri *mantra*, a teenage boy stands with a teenage girl. The girl is the personified treasure of very wonderful and sweet ecstatic love. From each of Her transcendental limbs a nectar ocean of golden splendor emanates. The boy is the personified form of the most wonderful and sweet nectar.

"Within the splendid ocean of light manifested from the *bija* syllable *klim* of the Kama-gayatri *mantra*, the sweet abode named Vrndavana is manifest. Within that Vrndavana resides an unlimitedly sweet fair and dark complexioned couple absorbed in enjoying amorous pastimes. Please worship and serve Them.

"Beyond the material world dominated by the three modes of nature is the divine ocean of bliss that is the *bija* syllable *klim* of the Kama-gayatri *mantra*. In that ocean is an incredibly beautiful island. On that island is the realm of Vrndavana, and in a secluded place of Vrndavana is an enchantingly beautiful forest garden. In that garden are Gandharvika-Giridhari, the two great treasures of intense transcendental bliss. Please worship Them with great devotion.

"Far from the material energy, which is the root of numberless material universes, is the sweet nectar of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's effulgence. Within that effulgence are the Vaikuntha planets, and in the most confidential portion of Vaikuntha is this blissful, glorious Vrndavana, splendid with the Kama-gayatri *bija*. Please worship Vrndavana's trees, which grow on a splendid island of sweet nectar risen from the effulgent spiritual ocean of the Kama-gayatri *bija*. These trees are the wonderful object of love for the very charming fair and dark divine couple.

"That realm is eternally free from the slightest touch of any material desire. It is manifested from the foya-syllable of the Kama-gayatri *mantra*. It is filled with the nectar of ecstatic love. This place is the form of the Kama-gayatri *bija* and the bliss of transcendental pastimes. In this place the supremely beautiful Gandharvika-Giridhari always stay." (VM)

Meaning of Kamadevaya

Kamadevaya is the master of the senses who by His desires (*kdmēna*) plays (*divyati*) various pastimes. By sounding His enchanting flute or arching His seductive eyebrows Syamasundara shows or expresses (*divyati*) His desire (*kdmēn*). Krsna is the transcendental Kamadeva, the God of desire, who conquers all desire by redirecting it to Himself.

"It is also stated in the *Gopala-tapani Upanisad* that when Krsna is spoken of as Cupid (*kamadevaya*), one should not think of Him as the Cupid of this material world. As already explained, Vrndavana is the spiritual abode of Krsna, and the word Cupid is also spiritual and transcendental. One should not take the material Cupid and Krsna to be on the same level. The material Cupid represents the attraction of the external flesh and body, but the spiritual Cupid

is the attraction by which the Supersoul attracts the individual soul. Actually lust and sex are there in spiritual life, but when the spirit soul is embodied in material elements, that spiritual urge is expressed through the material body and is therefore pervertedly reflected. When one actually becomes conversant in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can understand that his material desire for sex is abominable, whereas spiritual sex is desirable.

"Spiritual sex is of two kinds: one in accordance with the constitutional position of the self and the other in accordance with the object. When one understands the truth about this life but is not completely cleansed of material contamination, he is not factually situated in the transcendental abode, Vṛndavana, although he may understand spiritual life. When, however, one becomes free from the sex urges of the material body, he can actually attain the supreme abode of Vṛndavana. When one is so situated, he can utter the Kama-gayatri and *kama-bija mantra*." (TLC ch.31)

"*Kamadevaya* means He who performs pastimes by His desire or by the power of His love. Kama (love) is called a minister because it advises. Kama permeates the whole universe from Brahmaloṇa on down. Kama has five arrows that produce five effects: maddening, burning, cleansing, obstructing, and bewildering. These five arrows are permeated by the following five flowers: K—*mango*; L—*asoka*; I—*madhavi*; M—*jasmine*; bindu—*bakula*.

"The *Gopala-tapani Upaniṣad* says, 'Kṛṣṇa is the transcendental Cupid of Vṛndavana. The Kṛṣṇa Cupid has five flower arrows, which represent taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell. They also represent the five *rasas*; *santa*, *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya*, *madhurya*. The names of the five arrows: *cittānanda-dhara*, *vidyānanda-dhara*, *saddhanda-dhara*, *kāmdhanda-dhara*, *ramānanda-dhara*. The names of Kṛṣṇa's arrows correspond to five flowers and five sweet forms of Kṛṣṇa: *mango* flower—*citta-kādarpa* (Cupid of the mind); *asoka* flower—*kāmananda-prakāśa* (manifestation of the bliss of love); *bakula* flower—*vidyānanda-dhara* (holding the bliss of wisdom). The place of Cupid's divine love is Vṛndavana. The lotus flower is Srimatī Rādhikā, and the flavor of Her love is always beyond comprehension. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a bumblebee hovering over that lotus forever drinking its nectar.' "(KVV)

Meaning of Vidmahe

"*Vidmahe* means may we attain or come to know and surrender unequivocally unto that Kamadeva who has flowers (*puspa*) for arrows (*banaya*)" (KVV)

Meaning of Puspa, Banaya, Dhimahi

Puspa-banaya is a name for Cupid who is also known as Kādarpa or Kamadeva, the flower archer who ever shoots arrows of lust into the hearts of the fallen. Kṛṣṇa, however, is the transcendental Kamadeva, the spiritual Cupid, who shoots five flower arrows with His flower bow. These are the arrows of spiritual *kāma* represented by the five letters of the *kāma-bija klīṛh*. Each arrow, which is permeated by a different kind of flower, corresponds to a different part of Kṛṣṇa's sweet form. These arrows produce five different wonderful effects within the hearts of His loving devotees.

Dhimahi means, "Let us meditate on that transcendental Kamadeva, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the all-attractive, clever, and witty Viḍagdha Madhava. By shooting His five divine flower arrows

(*puspa banaya*) into the heart of His devotee, He maddens him with the enchantment of His beauty and *prema*. Then the arrows burn up all the devotee's material desires and completely cleanse His mind and heart.

"Protecting him, these arrows obstruct and prevent any further assaults by the illusory energy upon that fully surrendered devotee. Swimming in the blissful ocean of his eternal loving relationship with Krsna, the devotee sometimes becomes overwhelmed and bewildered by various ecstatic symptoms. At that time the actions of such *apremika bhakta*, dancing to the tune of Kamadeva's flute, may appear most unusual and bewildering to the *jivas* bound by the chains of lust."

In this way, one should meditate upon the wonderful effects of the arrows of the beloved Kamadeva, Sri Krsna the beautiful.

Meaning of Tan

"*Tan* means "that"—We know that Kamadeva (Krsna). We meditate upon that Kamadeva who has flower arrows and is *ananga*, the bodiless Cupid." (KVV)

Meaning of Ananga

The word *ananga* generally refers to Cupid, the bodiless one, whose body was once burned to ashes by Lord Siva. Although Siva partially defeated Cupid by destroying his body, Krsna completely vanquishes Cupid and enlists him in His service. The word *ananga*, therefore, can refer to Krsna, the transcendental Kamadeva, who is attracting the hearts of all purified persons.

Acaryas say that *ananga* may also refer to Krsna who once fainted due to the ecstasy of love. At that time Tulasi-manjari (Rati-manjari) leaned against the gate of the *kunja* and sang a sweet love song. Upon hearing that song, Krsna came back to life again. Due to loving ecstasy, He had lost His body (or bodily consciousness) which means He became *ananga*, without a body or awareness of His body, but by Tulasi's singing he regained His body.

Meaning of Pracodayat

"*Pracodayat* means 'Let Him appear fully.' By meditating (*dhimahi*) on Krsna one gets knowledge (*yidmahe*) of Krsna in His pastimes of love. Then one prays to Krsna to help him realize that form (*pracodayat*), which means 'May He (Krsna) impell us to do it.' " (KW)

In the eighth verse of *Manah-siksa*, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami prays, "O Giriraja, please give me conjugal love of God, and engage me in the loving service of Gandharvika." Dasa Gosvami uses the word "*prerayati*" which means, "He will engage" (referring to the service of Sri Radha). Devotees accepting the service of Srimati Radhika as their life and soul will take the word "*pracodayat*" in the Kama-gayatri to be identical with the word *prerayati*. As Raghunatha dasa Gosvami prayed to Krsna for Sri Radha's service; *sadhakas* will pray in the same way when they meditate upon the Kama-gayatri.

Kamadevaya refers to Madan-mohana, the Deity of Krsna, signifying initiation (*mantra-diksa*), which is a function of *sambandha*. *Puspabanaya* refers to Govindaji, the presiding Deity of

abhidheya, who helps one awaken love of God. *Ananga* refers to the Deity of Gopinatha who represents *prajojana*, the goal of *Krsna-prema* especially exemplified by the love of the *gopis*.

"The Kama-gayatri is divided into three parts representing *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prajojana*. 1) *Kamadeva*—is the Deity (Madan-mohan) who captivates our minds and hearts to establish our relationship with Krsna (*sambandha-tattva*). 2) *Puspabanaya*—is He (Govindaji) who carries the arrows of flowers, and develops our relationship with Krsna as an eternal maidservant of the *gopis* (*abhidheya-tattva*). 3) *Ananga*—is He (Gopinatha) who delivers the ultimate goal of life of satisfying the *gopis*, Radhika and Syama (*prajojana-tattva*).

"The Kama-gayatri *mantra* is just like a Vedic hymn, but it is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. There is no difference between the Kama-gayatri and Krsna. Both are composed of 24 *Vz* transcendental syllables. The *mantra* depicted in letters is also Krsna, and the *mantra* rises just like the moon. Due to this, there is a perverted reflection of desire in human society and among all kinds of living entities.

"In the *mantra*, *klim kdma-devdya vidmahe puspa-bdndya dhimahi tan no 'nangah pracodayat*, Krsna is called Kamadeva, Puspa-bana and Ananga. *Kamadeva* is Madana-mohana, the Deity who establishes our relationship with Krsna. *Puspa-bana* ("He who carries an arrow made of flowers") is Govinda, the Personality of Godhead who accepts our devotional service. And *Ananga* is Gopijana-vallabha, who satisfies all the *gopis* and is the ultimate goal of life.

"This Kama-gayatri (*klim kdma-devdya vidmahe puspa-bdndya dhimahi tan no 'nangah pracodayat*) simply does not belong to this material world. After advancing in spiritual understanding, a devotee worships the Supreme Personality of Godhead with his spiritual senses and fulfills the desires of the Lord.

*man'mand bhava mad-bhakto
mad-ydji mdm namaskuru mdm evaisyasi sacyam te
pratijane priyo 'si me*

Always think of Me and become My devotee. Worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend' (Bg. 18.65)." (Cc. *Madhya* 8.138 p.)

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura defines the Kama-gayatri: "Kama-gayatri is a *maha-mantra* which flows according to desire. The *sadhakas* who chant this *mantra* take their next birth in Vraja-mandala. In other words, they attain a spiritual body like one of Krsna's eternal Vrajavasi associates for the purpose of rendering pure devotional service.

"The worshipable object of this *mantra* is Rasaraja Sri Krsna, the King of *smgara-rasa* (the most blissful form of ecstatic conjugal love). He is Madana, the transcendental Cupid; He is Krsna, the all-attractive one; He is Nandatmaja, the darling son of Nanda Baba; and He resides in one and only one place—the blissful realm of Vraja-dhama.

"*Klim*—due to stealing the minds of the *vraja-gopis* headed by Srimati Radhika with the sweetness of His flute (*yenu-madhurya*), the word *klim* is used.

Kamadevaya—Due to stealing the discrimination of the *vraja-gopis* headed by Srimati Radhika with the sweetness of His pastimes (*lila-madhurya*), the word *kamadevaya* is used.

Puspa-banaya—Due to Kṛṣṇa stimulating the excitement of the blissful mellows of enjoyment in union with the *vraja-gopis* headed by Srimati Radhika; and stimulating this *sambhoga-rasa* by other things including the sweetness of His lovely graceful qualities (*lavanya-guna-madhuryadi*), the word *puspa-banaya* is used.

KLIM KAMA-DEVAYA VIDMAHE

"The word *kama* (desire) indicates *sambandha* (relationship with the Lord), and also connotes *anuga* (following obediently). Only on the path of spontaneous devotional love known as *kamanuga* is this Gayatri used for worship. *Kamanuga* is that path which follows the purified transcendental lusty desire for serving Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This *mantra's* effect is that it illuminates and intensifies the manifestation of one's most cherished desires.

"*Vidmahe*—"We know" that Person Kamadeva, who sports according to His own heart's desire. In other words, *kama-devaya-vidhmahe* means "we who are doing this *sadhana* in *vraja-madhurya-rasa* are aware in consciousness only because our consciousness is for Kamadeva, Who is the transcendental Cupid Kṛṣṇa.

PUSPA - BANAYA - DHIMAHİ

"Kamadeva is a "*puspa-banaya*"—a flower-archer Who uses five weapons which are the five letters of the *kama-bija klim*. By shooting them with His *samga* bow, these five weapons cause the bow to act in five specific qualities.

"*Dhimahi*—"We meditate" upon this type *oipuspa-bana*.

TAN NO 'NANGAH PRACODAYAT

"*Ananga*—He who is the all-pervading transcendental Cupid devoid of a body; He is situated in Vraja as the fresh young transcendental Cupid; He is the alluringly adolescent God of Love. He is the only worshipable object. He not only attracts the hearts and minds of all living beings, but He even attracts His own mind.

"His superexcellent bodily beauty cannot be equalled or surpassed by any other form. He is Syama, the dark beauty possessing the bodily luster of a fresh monsoon cloud. His transcendental body is a compressed living flow of divine luscious mellows. His stature perfectly personifies the King of *smgara-rasa* (the ornament of the most intimate mode of supreme conjugal mellows.)

'Nah'—This kind of Lord.

"*Pracodayat*—May this kind of Lord be pleased with us, and may He kindly engage us in His own loving service." (MD)

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has given a marvelous explanation of the intimate meaning of Kama-gayatri. Aspiring servants are forever indebted to such stalwart *rasika acaryas* for bestowing their boundless mercy. Only the most advanced devotees can have such revelations. If one is not so advanced, he should sincerely continue chanting the *mantra* on the

strength of the spiritual master's order. The combination of genuine *bhakti* and full faith in *guru* and Krsna gradually qualify the devotee to see Krsna in His most enchanting form as Kamadeva, the ever-fresh transcendental Cupid. Brahma personally set the example of a bewildered, confused soul who eventually became Krsna conscious by his sincere devotional attitude. Similarly, anyone following in his footsteps (*mahajana yena gatah so. pantah*) can achieve the same beautiful realizations.

Additional Meanings of Kama-gayatri

"Let us meditate upon that new transcendental Cupid of Vrndavana, Sri Krsna, who is always enchanting and ever-youthful. By His desire, Syama plays in different pastimes. Let us try to know that Kamadeva, Sri Krsna, who has five arrows of flowers that He shoots from the five threaded strings of His bow. Sri Krsna is Rasaraja, the king of all the mellows of conjugal love, and He greatly pleases us by engaging us in His transcendental loving service."

The Moons of Krsnacandra

*kama'gayavri'mantra'rupa, hay a krsnera svarupa,
sdrdha'cabbisa aksara tara haya se aksara 'candra' haya, krsne
kari' udaya,
trijagat kaild kamamaya*

"Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is identical (*krsnera svarupa*) with the Vedic hymn known as the Kama-gayatri (*kdma-gayatr-mantra-rupa*), which is composed of twenty-four and a half syllables. Those syllables are compared to moons that arise in Krsna. Thus all three worlds are filled with desire." (Cc. *Madhya* 21.125)

"The Vedic hymn known as Kama-gayatri describes the face of Krsna as the king of all moons. In metaphorical language, there are many different moons, but they are all one in Krsna. There is the moon of His mouth, the moon of His cheeks, the moonspots of sandalwood pulp on His body, the moons of the fingertips of His hands and the moons of the tips of His toes. In this way there are twenty-four and a half moons, and Krsna is the central figure of all of them." (TLC ch.10)

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura gives a wonderful description of the 24V2 moons on Krsna's transcendental body:

"In the Kama-gayatri there are *IWi* syllables, and these form 24 *Vi* full moons. These full moons arise in Sri Krsna's bodily form and thereby make the three words, *kama-maya*, or pervaded with His own transcendental lusty desire to sport. The *sastras* describe the moon-identities amongst the syllables of the Kama-gayatri *mantra*. Krsna's face is one moon; His cheeks are two; His forehead is a half-moon; the *tilaka* on His forehead is a full moon; fingernails are ten moons; and His toenails are ten moons. Thus intelligent authorities have revealed that all the *IWz* syllables of the Kama-gayatri *mantra* systematically form the different moons which correspond to the moons of Sri Krsna's bodily features.

"Although in the *Caitanya-caritamrta*, Sri Krsnadasa Kaviraja has also listed the letters in the Kama-gayatri to be 24 *Vz*, a great doubt arose within me. It seemed to me that Sri Krsnadasa Kaviraja has somehow rejected the apparent fact that the Kama-gayatri *mantra* contains 25

syllables. Therefore I wondered—on the basis of what scriptural proof does he say that the *mantra* has only 24^{1/2} syllables?

"Upon reviewing various *sastras* such as *Hari-namamrita-vyakarana*, the *Puranas*, the *Agamas*, and the *Natya-sastra* I discovered that the count of the syllables in the Kama-gayatri *mantra* totals exactly 25. Furthermore, the *Brhan Naradiya Parana* states, 'Sri Radha is the Princess of Vrndavana-dhama, and Her transcendental form is composed of 25 syllables.' After searching through all the works describing vowels and consonants, I could not find proof anywhere that this *mantra* adds up to 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ syllables. Therefore, I remained immersed in a great ocean of doubt.

"Is it possible that Sri Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami was unaware of all these things? No this is not possible. He is definitely in full knowledge of everything, and he is therefore completely free from the common material defects of error, illusion, and so forth. In his great treatise, *Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta*, Krsnadasa Kaviraja describes the moons on Krsna's transcendental body:

"In the mood of Srimati Radhika, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu describes the relationship between Krsna's transcendental form and the Kama-gayatri *mantra*. 'Krsna's form is represented in the Kama-gayatri *mantra*, which contains twenty-four and one-half syllables. These syllables are twenty-four and one-half moons that arise in Krsna and fill the three worlds with desire.

'Hey *sakhi*! Krsna's face is the king of moons, and His body is the throne on which He sits to rule the kingdom and maintain the society of moons. Krsna's two glistening cheeks, that defeat the shining of jeweled mirrors, are two full moons. His forehead is shaped like a half moon, and the dot of sandalwood paste on it is like one moon. His fingernails are like a market of moons that dance on His flute. Their song is the melody of that flute. His toenails are a host of moons that dance on the ground and whose song is the jingling of His anklebells.' (Cc. *Madhya* ch. 21)

"Even after considering this exhaustively from many points of view, I still could not come to a sound conclusion. At this point, I gave up all endeavors for finding the answer. Rejecting all eating and drinking, I became so upset in my mind that I decided to give up my body. In this sad mood, I sat motionless on the bank of Radha-kunda. If one is not properly aware of even the syllables of the *mantra*, then how will it be possible to become conscious of the Lord? Therefore it is befitting to give up the body.

"Well after midnight I finally dozed off to sleep. Then suddenly—I saw that Sri Vrsabhanunandini, Srimati Radhika Herself, had appeared to me and began to speak:

'Oh Visvanatha! Oh Hari Vallabha! Please get up! That which Krsnadasa Kaviraja has written is true; he is also My very confidential maidservant. By My mercy, he knows everything about My secret innermost moods. Please do not have any doubt about his statement. This *mantra* is the *mantra* for worshiping Me—indeed I can be known by the syllables of this *mantra*. But without My mercy, no one can learn anything about the mystery of these matters.

'The solution to the half-syllable question is found in the book known as *Vamagama-bhasvadi*. Seeing this book, Sri Krsnadasa Kaviraja has written as he did. Now please listen. After you wake up, refer to that book, and then compile all this evidence for the benefit of others.'

"Hearing these words of Srimati Radhika, I regained consciousness and quickly got up. My confusion was now gone. But crying, "Alas! Alas!" I lamented again and again over losing Radhika's *darsana*. Holding Her order in my heart, I endeavored to carry it out.

"While Radhika was describing the half-syllable to me in the vision, She had spoken thus: The letter "ya" (*devaya*) which is followed by the letter "vi" (*yidmahe*) is considered to be a half-syllable. This falls on Sri Krsna's forehead, which forms the halo of a half-moon. All other letters of the *mantra* are full syllables and therefore full moons.'

"The description of the half-syllable, as per the direct instruction of Srimati Radhika Herself, is indeed found in the book called *Varnagama-bhasvadi* thus: 'The letter ya when followed by the letter vi is celebrated as being a half syllable.' That which delivers the chanter is known as Gayatri." (MD)

Srila Bhakti-prajna Kesava Maharaja once gave this definition of the Kama-gayatri: "The Kama-gayatri is Radha and Krsna. Just chant sincerely, and the *mantra* will reveal everything to you." Jaya, Jaya Sri Radhe!

Meditations on Kama-gayatri

The *Svayambhuya-agama sastra* mentions this meditation on the Kama-gayatri *mantra*:

"Overwhelmed in ecstasy, Sri Mukunda triumphantly plays on His *murali* as He roams from grove to grove in the forest of Vrndavana. His beautiful body is dressed in charming clothing and embraced by Sri Radha. Completely subjugated by Radhika's love, Syama is addicted to enjoying with Her. Full of love for Radhika, Syama sometimes reveals His lustful mood by smiling and moving His eyebrows seductively."

Srila Krsna dasa Kaviraja wrote the following verse for meditating on Radha-Govinda at Yogapitha.

divyad-vmddranya-kalpa'drumddhah srimad'ratndgdra-sirhhdsana'sthau snmad-rddha-srlla'govinda-devau presthahbhih sevayamanau smardmi

"I meditate upon the indescribably beautiful forms of Radha-Govinda, sitting on a most elegant jewel-studded throne in the middle of a confidential *kunja* beneath a *kadamba* tree in the center of Vrndavana, which is filled with transcendental desire trees. Radha-Govinda are surrounded by their most intimate *sakhis* and *manjaris*, whose bee-like eyes are drinking the ambrosial nectar pouring from the lotus faces of the Divine Couple. Overwhelmed with *prema*, the *sakhis* are rendering various pleasing services like fanning and offering *tambula*. May my mind and heart always be absorbed in remembering this wonderful transcendental pastime." (*Cc.Antya* 1.6)

This verse, which is known by all Gaudiya Vaisnavas, actually depicts a very elevated level of Krsna consciousness. A devotee who is spiritually advanced may remember this verse along with the following meditation. While silently chanting the Kama-gayatri *mantra* in the mind and heart, the *sadhaka* should meditate on Radha and Krsna sitting in the middle of a big pink lotus flower throne, studded with jewels in a golden temple on the banks of the Yamuna. This place is known as Govindasthali or the Vrndavana Yogapitha. Radhika is offering *pan* to Krsna, and the spiritual master is standing on the side waiting to render service to Sri Radha. The

disciple is there in his *siddha-deha* assisting his *guru* by holding a jug of scented water or a *camara* whisk for him to offer to Srimati Radhika.

Benefits of Chanting Kama-gayatri

"Gayatri emanated as the song of Krsna's flute. It entered Lord Brahma's ears and immediately manifested within his lotus mouth. Thus receiving the Gayatri as it emanated from the divine flute song of Sri Krsna, the original *guru*. Lord Brahma was elevated to the status of twice-born." (BS v. 27)

"The divine vibration of Krsna's flute is the sound of truth, cognizance, and ecstasy (*saccidanandamaya*). The paragon of the *Vedas* is present within that divine sound. Kama-gayatri is superior amongst all Gayatris because the prayer and meditation contained within it are full of the highest transcendental pastimes (Krsna and *the gopis* in Vrndavana) which are not found in any other Gayatri.

"This Kama-gayatri, which is attained as the sequel to the Gopala-mantra, indicates the realization of the transcendental pastimes of *gopi-jana-vallabha*, the beloved of the *gopis*, after perfecting one's meditation and prayer to attain the service of that transcendental God of love, Kamadeva, the spiritual Cupid known as Sri Krsna. In the whole spiritual world there is no higher form of divine love than that of attaining an ecstatic *rasa-filled* relationship with Krsna under the shelter of *the gopis*." (BS v. 27 p. adapted)

The *Brahma Samhita* says, "By chanting the Kama-gayatri one will realize Krsna's sublime beauty." One will see the transcendental form of Krsna, Syamasundara, in the core of his heart, and, if the Lord so desires, one may see Krsna outside as well, *saksad-darsana*. This *mantra* helps a devotee develop Krsna's transcendental qualities, and enables one to perceive the blissful transcendental pastimes of Radha and Krsna in *aprakṛta* Vrndavana. Krsna will manifest Himself before the *sadhaka* in the form of Radhika-Syama surrounded by the *sakhis*. Thus one will get a chance to serve Yugala-kisora in Their blissful transcendental pastimes.

"Whoever faithfully chants the *kama-bija* combined with Kama-gayatri again and again will attain *prema-siddhi*, and will without a doubt obtain the loving service of Radha and Krsna in Vrndavana." (SKS)

"By meditating upon Kama-gayatri, Lord Brahma began to think, 'I am an eternal maidservant of Krsna.' Although the profound mysteries of acting as a maidservant of Krsna were not revealed to him, his discrimination between spirit and matter developed to such a degree that Lord Brahma became well acquainted with the ocean of truth. When all the truths of the *Vedas* were thus manifested within him, he offered this prayer (*Brahma-samhita*), which is the essence of all the *Vedas*, to the Supreme Lord Krsna. Since the *Brahma-samhita* contains the complete *vaisnava-siddhanta*, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu taught this hymn to His favorite devotees." (BS v. 28 p.)

Chapter Eight

GOPI BHAVA MANTRA

Introduction

At the time of taking *sannyasa*, Gaudiya Vaisnavas receive the Gopi-bhava mantra for the internal development *oiKrsna-prema*. The Gopi-bhava mantra is sometimes called "the *sannyasa mantra*," but this description is not fully accurate since *babajis* also chant this *mantra*. The Gopi-bhava mantra is mentioned in Gopala Bhatta Gosvami's *Samskara-dipika*. The *sannyasa mantra* refers instead to a *Srimad Bhagavatam* verse chanted by the *avadhuta-brahmana* from Avantipur.

The Sannyasa Mantra (of the *avadhuta-brahmana*)

*etdrh sa asthdya pardtma-nistham,
adhyasitam purvatamair maharsibhih aham tansy ami duranta-param,
tamo mukundanghri'nlse vayawa*

"I shall cross over the insurmountable ocean of nescience by being firmly fixed in the service of the lotus feet of Krsna. This was approved by the previous *acaryas*, who were fixed in firm devotion to the Lord, Paramatma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (SB 11.23.57)

A second translation is as follows: "The previous great sages have accepted and shown the path of *sannyasa*. I have now accepted that very form of life. Now, leaving everything aside, I shall run toward Vrndavana. There, taking the name of Mukunda, Krsna, I shall cross the ocean of nescience. Crossing this *maya*, I shall reach Vrndavana and fully enter the service of Krsna." (GV)

"Passing through the tract of land known as Radha-desa, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recited this verse in ecstasy." (Cc. *Madhya* 3.4) "This *sannyasa mantra* should be studied very seriously. Those who are accepting the *sannyasa* order should especially try to understand this important *mantra*" (SPT 20/2/70)

The *sonny asa mantra* gives a general picture of a *sannyasi's* ideal: to attain liberation by practicing a life of renunciation while offering oneself to the service Lord Krsna. With great determination, a *sannyasi* thinks, "By offering myself unto the service of Krsna (*mukunda-seva*), automatically my illusory environment will vanish, and I will get the eternal service of Krsna in Goloka Vrndavana." Through this *mantra* the *sannyasi* vows never to do anything which is not for the service and pleasure of Mukunda, Krsna. The renounced *sadhaka* maintains a firm resolve never to go back to his previous environment. He

thinks, "From today I offer myself exclusively for the service of Radha and Krsna."

"Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura says that of the sixty-four items required for rendering devotional service, acceptance of the symbolic marks *oisannydsa* is a regulative principle. If one accepts the *sannydsa* order, his main business is to devote his life completely to the service of Mukunda, Krsna. If one does not completely devote his mind and body to the service of the Lord, he does not actually become a *sannyasi*. It is not simply a matter of changing dress. The dress is not *sannydsa*, but the attitude of service to Krsna is.

"The word *pardtma-nistha*. (mentioned in the verse above) means being a devotee of Lord Krsna. *Pardtmd*, the Supreme Person, is Krsna. Those who are completely dedicated to the lotus feet of Krsna in service are actually *sannyasis*. As a matter of formality, the devotee accepts the three *dandas*. In addition, one should add the *jiva-danda* to the *tri-danda*. These *four dandas*, bound together as one, are symbolic of unalloyed devotional service to the Lord. In *Srimad-Bhdgavatam* there is no such thing as an *ekadandi-sannyasi* (accepted by Mayavadi *sannyasis*); indeed, the *tridandi-sannydsl* is accepted as the symbolic representation of the *sannydsa* order. By citing this verse from *Srimad-Bhdgavatam*, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted the *sannydsa* order recommended in *Srimad-Bhdgavatam*." (SB 11.23.57 p.)

Beg for Prema

In *Caitanya-caritamrta*, Sri Krsna dasa Kaviraja explains how Sri Caitanya's *antaranga-bhaktas* (*premika bhaktas*), the followers of Sri Gadadhara Pandita, were most successful in spreading the *sankirtana* movement of the Lord. The indication is that the greater the love for Krsna, the more successful the preaching will be. Since *sannyasis* are primarily preachers, their first and foremost duty is to love Krsna. The *sannyasa asrama*, therefore, lays stress on the internal development of *gopi-bhava*, or *Krsna-prema*.

Regarding this point, Srila Prabhupada once said in Hyderabad: "If you have no sufficient love for God, you cannot preach. Why are you preaching to me? You just show me the example." (SPT 74/35)

The external reason for taking *sannyasa* is to preach Krsna consciousness in every town and village, but internally one should think, "Just for pleasing Radha and Krsna, I am

accepting *sannyasa* to facilitate the development of *gopi-bhava*—pure selfless love."

Meaning of Om

Om signifies the combined loving form of Radha and Krsna and of the living entity. See Chapter two for a detailed explanation of Om.

Meaning of Klim

The word *klim* has different sounds. "Ka"—means the transcendental body of Sri Krsna, which is composed of eternity, unlimited knowledge, and ever-increasing bliss. "La"—signifies *Radhika-Syama'sprema-vilasa* (the beautiful pastimes originating from the loving dealings between Radha and Krsna). "I"—represents the form of *parama-prakrti*, Vmdavanesvari Sri Radha. "M"—is the bliss of conjugal love generated when Radha and Krsna kiss each other. The *bindu*, dot above the "M"—is Their kiss.

Sometimes there is confusion about the gender of two words in the Gopi-bhava mantra, namely *klim* and *svaha*. One Gaudiya *sannyasi* has said that in this *mantra* these two words are neuter;

they are neither masculine nor feminine. *Klim* is both the power and the powerful. *Klim* represents Kamadeva Krsna. Though *klim* has not taken the name of Radha, he has taken the power of Radha. The subject is Krsna, but without the power or *sakti* of Radha, Krsna cannot exist as the proper independent subject. Please refer to Chapters six and seven for more description of *klim*.

The word *svaha* means *yogamaya*. In other words, "With the blessings and assistance of *Kisna's yogamaya* potency I will offer myself to the lotus feet of Radharani."

Meaning of Gopi Bhava

Gopi-bhava-asrayaya—means *gopi-bhava* only for Vrajendranandana Sri Krsna, not Narayana, Visnu, or others. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu taught the principle of *gopi-bhava*, or offering all of one's love to Krsna in the mood of the '*Vrajagopis*. In the following verse, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura reveals the supremacy of worshiping Krsna in His holy abode of Vrndavana.

drddhyo bhagavdn vrajesa-tanayas tad-dhdma vmddvanam, ramya kascid upasand vraja-vadhu-varga-vlrya kalpita, srimad-bhdgavatam amalam purdnam premd pum-artho mahdn, sri-caitanya mahdprabhor matam idam tatradaarah na parah. "The philosophy of

Lord Caitanya is that Krsna is the only object of worship, and similarly, His place, Vrndavana-dhama, is also worshipable. Vrajendra-nandana Hari, Krsna. Krsna is very much pleased when He is addressed as Vrajendra-nandana, Yasodanandana." (SPT 28/7/66)

"Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, *drddhyo bhagavdn vrajesa-tanayas tad-dhdma vmddvanam*. Vrndavana is as good as Krsna. Therefore, if one somehow or other gets the opportunity to live in Vrndavana, and if one is not a pretender but simply lives in Vrndavana and concentrates his mind upon Krsna, one is liberated from material bondage" (SB 9.19.19 p.)

"*Ramya kdcid upasand vraja-vadhu-vargendyd kalpita*. The best method of worship of Krsna was exhibited by the *gopis*. Now what were the methods of worship of the *gopls'*] They were not very learned scholars or Vedantists, nor were they theosophists or mental speculators. They were ordinary village girls, not from very high families. They were daughters of cowherdsmen. The *gopis'* method of Krsna worship was that they could not forget Krsna even for a moment. That was their qualification.

" I shall try to explain how they were loving Krsna. When Krsna was away from the village tending cows, the *gopis* were thinking, 'Oh, Krsna's foot is so soft, and He's walking barefoot on the ground. The chips of stones must be pricking His foot, and how much He's suffering!' In this way they were crying at home. While cooking or feeding the children, the *gopis* were always thinking of Krsna. That was their only qualification. They were so much absorbed in thoughts of Krsna that not a single moment passed without Krsna consciousness.

"Therefore Caitanya Mahaprabhu recommends *ramyd kdcid upasand vraja-vadhu-vargendyd kalpita*. There is no better method of worship than that conceived by the *gopis*. The *gopis* were twenty-four hours always Krsna conscious. They were requesting Krsna, 'My dear Krsna, *many yogis* and saintly persons go to the forest to meditate upon Your lotus feet. Although they try to meditate, they think of something else and their meditation fails. But in our case Your lotus feet are so much fixed in our hearts that we think only of You, and cannot discharge our family duties. So kindly go out of our hearts so that we can do our duties.'

"This is ideal Krsna consciousness. You have to mold your life in such a way that you always think of Krsna. The *gopis* were housewives, yet despite all their domestic duties they were only thinking of Krsna." (SPT 16/3/68)

"So this is Caitanya Mahaprabhu's philosophy, that *drddhya-vastu*, the worshipable Lord, is Krsna. And as He is worshipable, His *dhdma* is also worshipable. We should not commit any offense

in the *dhdma*, and follow the footsteps of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Then we'll be favored by the grace of Krsna to understand Him and His pastimes with Radharani." (SPT 14/3/74)

In Vrndavana, the *gopis* worship Krsna, the transcendental Cupid, *byparakiya madhurya ujjvala rasa*, the mood that they are Krsna's paramours; not lawful wives with wedded love toward Him. The *gopis* are Krsna's personal *saktis* or personified energies of bliss, but in Vrndavana, Yogamaya shows that they are *areparakiya upapati* (not married to Krsna but to other *gopas*) The *madhurya-rasa* of the *vraja-gopis* is not an ordinary type but a special variety called *unnata-ujjvala prema*. The *gopis* are full of *seva-bhava*, the mood of selfless service. Their love or *bhava* is totally free of *kama*, mundane lust.

The minds of the *gopis* are perfectly pure (*nirmala*), full of *prema*, and completely devoid of any selfish desires (*anyabhilasita sunyam*). Their devotion is known as *rasa-mayi bhakti*. The *gopis'* *bhava* or love toward Krsna is called *mahabhava*. When *anuraga*, an advanced stage of transcendental *prema*, becomes manifested in a very wonderful way in its unrivaled form which is *asamurdhva* (nothing can compare with or exceed it), then it becomes *mahabhava*.

Even Syamasundara, the transcendental Kamadeva, becomes maddened by that state of love known as *mahabhava*. The *gopis* have love for Krsna up to the level of *mahabhava*. Only Srimati Radhika's love exceeds even this in what is called *madan-akhya mahabhava*. When all the seven states (*sneha, maan, pranaya, raga, anuraga, bhava, mahabhava*) of transcendental *prema* up to *mahabhava* simultaneously manifest and appear within Srimati Radhika, the personified quintessence of Krsna's divine pleasure potency (*hiadini-sakti*). She displays a most unique state of ecstasy unequalled by any other *vraja-gopi*. That superexcellent state of *bhava* is called *madan-akhya mahabhava*.

Ujjvala-nilamani explains that Sri Krsna goes mad under the influence of the *gopis'* wonderful *mahabhava prema*. Usually Krsna's mind is composed and peaceful. But the power of the *gopis'* *bhava* overwhelms Krsna's mind. He becomes so confused and disturbed that He does not know what to do. In ordinary *prema* Krsna returns the love of His devotee in an equal measure. But with the *gopis'* *mahabhava*, Krsna feels, "I can neither return nor properly reciprocate with the intensity of the *gopis'* *prema*; and it drives Me mad!"

Every *gopi* possesses *mahabhava*, but only Srimati Radhika has *madan-akhya mahabhava*. At this level of *mahabhava*, the *gopis* only want to give pleasure to Krsna. They are completely devoid of any desires for their personal satisfaction or happiness. In

that mood they have union with Kṛṣṇa. However, among Gaudiya Vaisnavas the highest attainment is service in *manjari bhava*. The mood of the *manjaris* is nicely depicted in this excerpt from *Ananda Candrika*:

"Oh Kṛṣṇa! Even more than the pleasure of having Your direct bodily association, we always desire the pleasure of seeing You intimately enjoying with Rādhikā within the *nikunjas* of Vraja. At that time we feel the greatest happiness as we watch You through the slits in the walls."

This is the platform of *manjari-bhava* upon which the *sadhaka* meditates with the words: *gopi-bhava asrayaya*. The *manjaris* do not desire to personally associate with Kṛṣṇa, but they feel extremely happy when Srimatī Rādhikā Herself is associating with Kṛṣṇa. They think, "Oh, how They are enjoying." This is the *mula-* *mantra* of the Gaudiya Vaisnava's worship which is also known as *srestha manjari-bhava sadhana*, practice in the mood of a *manjari*. *Manjari-bhava* means to be serving always. When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are in the *nikunja mandira*, the *manjaris* are pleasing Them with a variety of intimate services. This is the shelter and goal of a Gaudiya Vaisnava's *gopi-bhava*.

Meaning of Asrayaya

The word *asrayaya* refers to Srimatī Rādhārāṇī, the supreme *asraya-vigraha*, who is the perfectional form of shelter. Śrī Rādhā is the reservoir of love and the predominated Divinity. She is the source, support, and the residence of Kṛṣṇa's spiritual love. *Asrayaya* means the lotus feet of Srimatī Rādhikā, the ultimate shelter of all Vraja-gopu who possess *smgara-rasa*. Rādhikā is the *prema-asraya*, the reservoir of *prema*. She is the object and Kṛṣṇa is the subject (*yisaya*) *oiprema*. The word "*asrayaya*" points the *sadhaka* towards the ultimate goal of *Rādhā-dāsyam*, or taking shelter in the service of the maidservants of the most confidential maidservants of Srimatī Rādhikā, namely Lalitā-sakhī and Śrī Rūpa-manjari.

The word "*asrayaya*" can also refer to the *asraya-tattva*—an eternal associate of the Lord who is the divine shelter principle for the conditioned soul. *Thejiva* must take shelter of a *raganuga* devotee in his specific *rasa* in order to enter the eternal pastimes of the Lord. Applying this idea, the Gopi-bhava mantra can mean, "My only desire is to surrender myself completely (*svaha*), and take full shelter at the lotus feet of *mygurudeva* who is immersed in *gopi-bhava*, and fully engaged as a maidservant of the maidservants of Srimatī Rādhikā."

Sometimes the question is asked, "What is the subject in the Gopi-bhava mantra? Does *gopi-bhava asrayaya* mean that, Rādhā is

the shelter of the *gopis'* *prema* or *bhava*} Or does it mean that, Krsna is the shelter of the *gopis'* love?

"The *Kama Upanisad* describes Krsna as *eko bahu sydm*. The one Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Krsna manifests Himself in many, and thus all diversities are in Him, and He is in all diversities. Krsna is nevertheless different from all of them. That is the inconceivable mystic power of the Lord, and as such everything is simultaneously one with and different from His inconceivable potency (*acintya-bheddbheda-tattva*).\" (SB 2.4.7 p.)

There are two conceptions to consider when trying to understand the Absolute Truth, Sri Krsna. One conception is according to *tattva* (philosophical truth) and one according to *rasa*. If preference is given to *tattva*, then Radha and Krsna are one and the same. Sometimes Krsna becomes the subject (*yisaya*) or object (*asraya*), and sometimes Radha becomes the subject or object of *prema*. According to *rasa*, or relishing the mellow of divine love, Radha is seen to be superior to Krsna. The following pastime shows Radha's supremacy.

Once Radhika and Syama were sitting together in a beautiful *nikunja*. Seeing that Radha was feeling much more bliss than He was, Syama wondered, "Why is She like that? Whatever bliss I feel is coming from Radhika, and that is why Her bliss surpasses mine." According to *rasa*, the conclusion is that Radha is superior to Krsna.

Therefore, in the Gopi-bhava mantra, Radha is the shelter (*asraya*) of the *gopis'* *bhava* or blissful *prema*. In *vraja-lila* one often sees that Syama come before the *gopis* and cries because of Radha's impenetrable *maan*. He especially begs the *manjaris* for their mercy so that He can enter the *kunja* and again meet with Radhika. By this one sees that the *gopis* are the shelter of Krsna's love, and of all the *gopis* Radharani is the main *asraya* *oigopi-bhava*.

Sri Radhika is the *gopi* referred to in the phrase '*gopi-bhava asrayaya*.' Radha is the shelter of the *gopis'* love. *Sannyasis* accept *gopi-bhava* to serve as Radha's maidservants. It is the fortunate *manjaris* alone who understand and relish the ecstatic symptoms felt by both Radha and Krsna. The *Vraja gopis* and *yuthesvaris* (*gopi* group leaders) cannot savor the sweet ecstasies of Radha and Krsna's intimate conjugal pastimes. *Gopi-bhava* means *radha-bhava*, the servitor *bhava* or the mellow of being predominated by Gopinatha, the Lord and master of the *gopis*.

sakhl vind ei lild pusta ndhi haya sakhi lild vistsdriyd, sakhl

dsvddaya

"Without the *gopis*, these pastimes between Radha and Krsna cannot be nourished. Only by their cooperation are such pastimes broadcast. It is their business to taste the mellows. (Cc. *Madhya* 8.204)

In essence, the word "*asrayaya*" means, "I offer myself to the shelter of the *vraja gopis'* *bhava* which is personified in Srimati Radharani."

Meaning of Svaha

The word *svaha* means self-surrender, '*svaha ca atma samarpana iti*,' that by which one surrenders his very self (body, mind, words, and heart) to the Supreme Lord. *Svaha* means Vrndavana. It signifies that 'I surrender myself in Vrndavana to Radha and Krsna who are enjoying matchless mellows during their transcendental pastimes within the forest bowers.' The devotee in the mood of *manjari-bhava* surrenders himself and gives everything he has for the pleasure of the Divine Couple. In short, *svaha* means, "I surrender myself fully to Radha and Krsna."

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said, "The syllable 'Sva' means one's own and 'Sva' also means wealth. If we have the one who is Govinda's own wealth—the one who makes Him wealthy; that wealth is everything to Govinda—if She becomes the object of our worship, then we will understand what worship is. If after reading the eighteen-thousand verses of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, we do not come to know about Her, then our reading was in vain." (*Prabhupada—Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati*)

In this passage our *parama-guru*, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, gives a most sublime meditation on the word "*svaha*." He indicates that Govinda-priya, Srimati Radhika, should be our everything, our only wealth, and our only object of worship—just as She is for Krsna. The word "*svaha*" takes us to the level of *gopi-bhava*, namely offering everything we have for the eternal service of Radhika's lotus feet—our greatest wealth and treasure. We are servants of the lotus feet of this great treasure of *prema*, the ocean of Radha and Krsna's sweet love.

"Sri Krsna's sense of happiness is limited by the happiness of the *gopis*. Devotees in Vrndavana, therefore, try to serve the *gopis*, namely Radharani and Her associates. If one gains the favor of the *gopis*, he easily gains the favor of Krsna. Because of the recommendation of the *gopis*, Krsna at once accepts the service of the devotee. Lord Caitanya, therefore, wanted to please the *gopis* instead of Krsna." {Cc.*Adi* 4.189 p.)

In summary, the word *svaha* means: "Sva"—"I myself am a maidservant of the *gopis*," or "I am a *gopi's* maidservant and I want to give everything to Krsna just as *the gopis did*." "Ha"—"I am giving myself thinking I am an unpaid maidservant of the *gopis*."

Thus, I offer myself as a female maidservant (*manjari*) to the lotus feet of Srimati Radhika and the *gopis*." (Additional information; Chapter six)

Meaning of Gopi-Bhava Mantra

- 1) "I offer myself wholeheartedly to the shelter of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Externally meditating on the prayer of the Avanti *brahmana*, I will try to develop that mood (*bhavana*) of a *tridandi-bhiksu* while offering myself to Rasaraja Mahabhava Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who is non-different from Radha and Krsna. By preaching Krsna consciousness I will receive Mahaprabhu's mercy. Then I will attain *Krsna-prema*, and the eternal service of the servants of the servants of Srimati Radharani who is situated at the pinnacle of *gopi-bhava* known as *mahabhava*."
- 2) "In *aprakṛta* Vrndavana in the spiritual world, Rasaraja Sri Krsna and Mahabhava Sri Radha are enjoying many different *lilas* such *3sprema-vilasa;jala-keli*, and *vana-vihara*. Through my services I am giving happiness to Radha and Krsna. By fully developing this *manjari-bhava*, I can completely surrender myself at the lotus feet of Radha and Krsna for Their eternal loving service."
- 3) "I dedicate myself to the service of Sri Rupa-manjari and Sri Rati-manjari under the guidance of Sri Lalita-sakhi and Sri Visakha-sakhi in trying to please Radha and Krsna. As a *gopi* of Vrndavana, I become most happy when Radha and Krsna come together and enjoy each other's company. The *mantra* can be taken to mean, '*tat tad icchami*'—'I have no desire to personally enjoy with Krsna. This is the opposite of *kamanuga bhava*, where one desires to enjoy directly with Krsna.'"
- 4) "The *vraja-gopis* are the best devotees of Krsna, and they are full of *gopi-bhava*, the supreme form of divine love and selfless dedication. All the five *rasas* are fully present in Vrndavana^ candra Krsna. Of these devotional mellows, *srngara rasa*, or boundless conjugal love, is the highest and most fulfilling. The *vraja-gopis* are eternally swimming in the ecstatic ocean of *smgara-^ rasa*. To attain the service of Krsna's intimate conjugal pastimes one must surrender to and take shelter of the *vraja-gopis'* moods and mellows. In reality, all *jivas* are *prakṛti* or female, and Sri Krsna is the *paramo, purusa*, the supreme male enjoyer. Only the *gopis* are fit to satisfy Krsna's desires and establish *srngara rasa* toward Him. They alone fully please Krsna the *mosi*;.,! am surrendering to

Krsna-kisora by offering myself to the shelter and guidance of such *vraja-gopis*."

5) "The word *svaha* indicates that we are also *nitya-sakhis* or *manjaris*. We are taking shelter of, and offering ourselves for the eternal service of Srimati Radhika, the perfect form and expression of *gopi-bhava*."

Gopi-Bhava Mantra Meditations

In the following entries, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and other benevolent *acaryas* kindly reveal the proper mood for chanting the Gopi-bhava mantra. Success in any endeavor to please Krsna depends more on the mood and attitude in trying than in the attempt itself. The *Srimad Bhagavatam* glorifies Krsna as *bhdva-grdhi jandrhdhana*—"the Supreme Lord Krsna accepts the humble, loving sentiments of a devotee's worship."

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is known as *bhdva-grdhi janardana* because He takes only the essence of a devotee's attitude. If a devotee sincerely surrenders, the Lord, as the Supersoul in everyone's heart, immediately understands this. Thus even though externally a devotee may not render full service, if he is internally sincere and serious the Lord welcomes his service nonetheless. Thus the Lord is known as *bhdva-grdhi janardana* because He takes the essence of one's devotional mentality." (SB 8.23.2 p.)

The Gopi-bhava mantra, which is coming in the line of Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana, is completely dedicated to the *sakhis* in *gopi-bhava*, and it grants entrance into the divine pastimes of Radha and Krsna. This *mantra* gives one the potency to offer himself completely to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Then by His grace, and under the guidance of Sri Rupa Gosvami, one will attain the final goal of Radha-Govinda's *nitya-seva*.

The Gopi-bhava mantra indicates this objective, but the real practicing life will start after a *sannyasi* is enriched with the wealth of *sravana* and *kirtana*. The tender creeper of devotion must be carefully protected from disturbances. It must be nurtured with the life-giving water of *sravana* and *kirtana*, and nourished with the potent fertilizer of service to *gum* and Vaisnavas. After obtaining steadiness and purity by performing *sadhana bhajana* one will rise to the stage of taste or *ruci* and become firmly established in devotion.

One must first attain *ruci* before meditating on *vraja gopi-bhava*, so there will be no chance of falling down to the mundane plane. If one still polluted by *anarthas* and *avidya* tries to meditate that "Now I am a *manjari* and I am doing such and such service," he will succumb to the illusory environment

and not receive the rare treasure of the *gopis'* pure devotion. Before arriving at this stage a *sannyasi* will chant the Gopi-bhava mantra, continue his *sadhana-bhajana*, and carry on with the routine work of preaching and service to *guru* and Vaisnavas. Until *ruci* comes one must patiently wait for meditating on Krsna's conjugal love and the intimate service of Srimati Radhika under the guidance of the *sakhis* and *manjaris* in the Gaudiya line of *gums*.

Sannyasis who are firmly fixed in *bhajana* and who are relishing the nectar of devotion may adopt the following meditations before chanting the Gopi-bhava mantra. These scenes may also be held in the mind while chanting the *mantra*.

1) An advanced *sannyasi*, who has crossed the ocean of *anarthas* and become firmly situated in devotional taste or *ruci*, may meditate in the following ways on the Gopi-bhava mantra: "My eternal spiritual identity is also that of a *manjari*. Meditating on *aprakṛta* Vrndavana, I see that Madhava is waiting desperately at the gate, begging to enter the *nikunja* of Sri Radhika. But He needs the mercy of the *gopis* to gain entrance there. Madhava surrenders Himself to the *manjaris*, taking shelter of their *gopi-bhava*, mellow of conjugal love. By their mercy He enters Radha's *nikunja* to extinguish the burning fire of His separation from Her. Quickly Madhava finds relief by submerging Himself in the refreshingly cool water of Radhika's *prema-sagara*, the ecstatic ocean of Her matchless love."

2) "*Thesadhaka* aspiring for *gopi-bhava* should deeply meditate thus: 'I am in the company of Lalita-sakhi and other *sakhis* in the group of Gandharvika. I am a maidservant of Sri Rupa-manjari, and I live in the village of Javat. I am playful, witty, and full of bliss. I am an adolescent, with a complexion the color of pure molten gold, and I stand beside Radhika-Madhava.'" (CS)

3) "When Priyatama Syama was performing His *rasa-lila*, one *gopi*, becoming disturbed by the thought that Her service was equated with the other *gopis* present, immediately left. In the absence of that one *gopi*, Syama could not taste any sweetness in the *rasa* dance, even though millions of other *gopis* were there. The collective service of all the *gopis* could not equal the service of that special *gopi* named Srimati Radhika. To search for Sri Radha, Syama at once gave up the company of the other *gopis*.

"As the *rasa-lila* became meaningless to Krsna without the merciful presence of Srimati Radhika, similarly, Srila Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami shows that a desperate *sadhaka* feels that life is useless without receiving the mercy of Srimati Radharani. 'There is a hope that is sustaining me and nurturing my existence. With that hope I am somehow passing my days, dragging my life through these tedious times. That nectarean

hope is attracting me and keeping me alive. But my patience has reached its end; I cannot wait any more.

At this moment, if You do not show Your mercy to me, I am finished. I shall lose my hope forever, and give up the desire to live. It is all useless without Your mercy. I can't stand to live another moment.

'Even Vrndavana, which is dearer to me than life itself; I am disgusted with it. It is painful and always pinching me. What to speak of anything else. I am even fed up with Krsna. It is shameful to utter such words. But I can have no love even for Krsna, unless and until You take me within Your confidential camp of service.' (*Vilapa-kusumanjali*)

"This is the meaning of *gopi-bhava-asrayaya*—hoping against hope to someday attain the shelter of Srimati Radhika's eternal loving service. However, it is only by the grace of the most confidential servants of Srimati Radhika coming in the line of the six Gosvamis that we may attain such a desperate standard of surrender and pure devotion as revealed by Srila Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami." (SGV, adapted)

When to Chant the Gopi Bhava Mantra?

Should the Gopi-bhava mantra be chanted before or after , chanting the other Gayatri *mantras*'? Senior Gaudiya *sannyasis* „ say that ultimately it does not matter, but generally all the' followers of *tridandi-gosvami* Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati'',,, Thakura chant the Gopi-bhava mantra after finishing the other', Gayatri *mantras*. The conception of one's full transcendental^ identity and the necessary mercy to advance that conception gradually increase as one chants the *mantras* beginning with Brahma-gayatri. As the primeval *sadhaka*. Lord Brahma became enlightened with the ocean of truth by the transcendental effulgence of the Brahma-gayatri. The Brahma-gayatri is the *isvara-mantra* denoting the supreme controller present as the Paramatma Sri Krsna in the heart. After deeply meditating on the Brahma-gayatri one can enter the transcendental world of devotional service. In other words, the powerful Brahma-gayatri lights up the path, lifts the *sadhaka* out of the dark world of ignorance and illusion, and carries him to the transcendental realm of divine service. Gayatri, therefore, means that which liberates one. Leaving behind the material world, one exists on the spiritual plane surpassing all lower stages of consciousness, namely sensual, mental and intellectual.

Taking shelter of *guru*, the *sadhaka* meditates upon him by chanting the appropriate *guru-mantras*. The Guru-mantra and Guru-gayatri must be chanted first (before the Gopi-bhava mantra) because all spiritual strength and wealth of *bhajana*

comes through Sri Guru. First a *sadhaka* offers himself at the lotus feet of Sri Guru, and by his blessings he becomes eligible to worship Gauranga Mahaprabhu, the supreme form of Godhead who is non-different from Radha and Krsna. Without remembering Sri Guru and receiving his mercy, no one can understand and worship Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. By chanting the Guru-mantra and Gayatri, and acting under *guru's* guidance a *sadhaka* will clearly realize that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu (Rasaraja-Mahabhava) is the unified form of Radha-Govinda.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is eagerly waiting to give the sincere *sadhaka* entrance into Krsna's *vraja-Ula* and award him the eternal service of Sri Radha (*radha-dasyam*). With the mercy of Mahaprabhu descending through the Gaura-mantra and Gaura-gayatri, a *sadhaka* will understand the *prayojana-tattva* as revealed in the Gopala-mantra and Kama-gayatri. By the grace of Gauranga the fortunate devotee will realize that *Krsna-prema* is the one and only desirable goal of life. In the Kama-gayatri the transcendental Kamadeva Sri Krsna stands before the *sadhaka* waiting to fulfill his desire. But having already received the abundant mercy of Sri Guru and Gauranga, the faithful devotee abandons all material desires, and thereby attains the qualification to see the sweet pastimes of the Divine Couple.

The devotee then fully surrenders to Gopijanavallabha Krsna in the Gopala-mantra, and realizes the fulfillment of his sole desire for Radha-Gopinatha's eternal service in Vrndavana by the Kama-gayatri. First a *sadhaka* must surrender to Krsna, then he can chant the Gopi-bhava mantra, and offer himself (*svaha*) fully for the eternal service of Sri Radha under the guidance of Sri Rupa Manjari.

Through the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has inspired the whole world to attain the exclusive service of Radha and Krsna. The Brahma-gayatri liberates one from the material plane of misconception and places one firmly on the platform of spiritual reality. By chanting the Guru and Gaura-gayatris the devotee receives the blessings and ability to meditate upon and realize the mysteries of the Gopala-mantra and Kama-gayatri. Surrendering to Krsna and desiring nothing" but the loving service of Gopijanavallabha, the *sadhaka* meditates upon the Gopi-bhava mantra. Then he offers himself completely for the divine service of Sri Radha, the absolute shelter and "unlimited reservoir of *gopi-bhava*. The sincere devotee gradually¹ attains such a coveted position by faithfully following in the footsteps of Sri Rupa-manjari and the Vraja *gopis*

Sannyasa Siksamrta

The rest of this chapter contains pertinent information about the *sannyasa asrama* that will benefit *sannyasis* in general. It will also help those serious souls who want to take *sannyasa*, and dedicate themselves to the internal service of Radha-Govinda,' and the external service of Srīman Mahāprabhu by preaching *vraja-prema-bhakti* all over the world.

Qualifications for Sannyasa

*asvamedharh gavalambham, sannydsam pala'paitrkam devarena
sutotpattim, kalau panca vivarjayet*

"Asvamedha sacrifice, gomedha sacrifice, *sannyasa*, and to get child by the husband's younger brother—these things are forbidden in this age." (*Brahma-vivarta Purana*)

Citing this verse, critics challenge the acceptance of *sannyasa* in Kali-yuga. *Acaryas* say this Vedic injunction prohibits taking of *kanna-sannyasa*, which is accepted to attain Svarga *mukti*. In Kali-yuga many stalwart, vastly learned, and fully realized *acaryas* such as Sankara, Viṣṇuswami, Madhvacarya, Ramanuja and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu have taken *sannyasa*. Obviously such wise personalities are not violating the Vedic law. Besides the forbidden *karma-sannyasa*, there are two forms of the renounced order that are acceptable in the age of Kali. One is *isjñana-sannyasa* and the other is *bhakti-sannyasa*, which Lord Caitanya took to *giveprema-bhakti* to the conditioned souls.

For spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness a devotee accepts *bhakti-sannyasa* with a vow to offer his whole being (body, mind, and words) for the selfless service of Guru and Gaurāṅga. One is qualified to accept *bhakti-sannyasa* when he has the *sankalpa* (mental resolve) to promise before the Radha-Kṛṣṇa *vigraha*, *guru*, Vaiṣṇavas and fire never to return to materialistic enjoyment and to offer his entire self for the service of Guru and Gaurāṅga until death.

Before accepting the renounced order of life one should read the *Bhagavata* narration of the Avanti *brahmana*. After considering all the points of this story one can decide if he has the necessary qualification to uphold the vows of *sannyasa*.

"With a determined mind the Avanti *brahmana* untied the knots of desire within his heart. He then assumed the role of a peaceful and silent *sannyasi* mendicant. He wandered about the earth, keeping his intelligence, senses, and life air under control. To beg charity he traveled alone to various cities and villages. He did not advertise his advanced spiritual position, and thus he was not recognised by others. Seeing him as an old, dirty beggar, rowdy persons would dishonor him with many insults.

Someone would take away his *danda* or his begging bowl. Some took *hisjapa* beads or snatched his ragged clothing.

"Displaying these things before him, they would pretend to offer them back but would then hide them again. When he sat down to eat his *madhukari*, sinful rascals would come and pass urine on it, and spit on his head. Although he had taken a vow of silence, they would try to make him speak, and if he refused to speak they would beat him with sticks. Others would chastise him saying, 'This man is a thief and then tie him up. They would criticize, insult and ridicule him saying, This man is a hypocrite and a cheat. He makes a business of religion simply because he lost his wealth and his family threw him out.' Some would pass

foul air upon him, or bind him with chains like a captive animal. The *brahmana* understood that all his suffering was unavoidable. Even while being insulted and chastised he remained steady in his spiritual duties and fixed in his determination to serve the Lord." (SB 11.23.31-41)

A candidate for *sannyasa* must be pure in mind and heart; fixed' in chanting *nama sankirtana* and well-versed in Gaudiya Vaisnava, philosophy; detached from society, friends, family, and sense gratification; intensely desiring nothing else but pure love of Radha and Krsna; filled with compassion, and a genuine desire to help others by distributing Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's rare gift of *Radha-Gmmda prema-bhakti*.

"The *sannyasa* candidate must be prideless, nonviolent, and fully in control of the six urges (lust, anger, greed, envy, illusion^ madness). *Agoswami* is one who controls his *karma aadjnanai indriyas* (working and knowledge-acquiring senses)." (SD)

A *sannyasi* must give up the *ahankara* of "I and mine." He should never think, "I am a *guru* or I am a *sannyasi*." One should sincerely feel himself to be lower than all others and always think, "I am a lowly servant of the servant of the servants of Sri Gopinatha." A *sannyasi* that demands respect or dominates others by proclaiming, "Don't you know, I am a *sannyasi* and you must serve me" is a most unqualified person for the sacred order of renunciation.

An aspiring *sannyasi* must possess the twenty-eight qualities of a saintly person mentioned in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. He may not have all these qualities in full measure but they must all be at least partially present, especially the quality of *krpalu*, or mercy. "A devotee cannot tolerate seeing the world merged in ignorance and suffering the whiplashes of maya. Therefore he busily engages in distributing Krsna consciousness and is called *krpalu*, or merciful." (SB 11.11.32 p.)

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: 0 Uddhava, a saintly person is merciful and never injures others. Even if others are aggressive he is tolerant and forgiving toward all living entities. His strength and meaning in life come from the truth itself, he is free from all envy and jealousy, and his mind is equal in material happiness and distress. Thus, he dedicates his time to work for the welfare of all others. His intelligence is never bewildered by material desires, and he has controlled his senses.

"His behavior is always pleasing, never harsh and always exemplary, and he is free from possessiveness. He never endeavors in ordinary, worldly activities, and he strictly controls his eating; He therefore always remains peaceful and steady. A saintly person is thoughtful and accepts Me as his only shelter. Such a person is very cautious in the execution of his duties and is never subject to superficial transformations, because he is steady and noble, even in a distressing situation.

"He has conquered over the six material qualities—namely hunger, thirst, lamentation, illusion, old age and death. He is free from all desire for prestige and offers honor to others. He is expert in reviving the Krsna consciousness of others and therefore never cheats anyone. Rather, he is a well-wishing friend to all, being most merciful. Such a saintly person must be considered the most learned of men.

"He perfectly understands that the ordinary religious duties prescribed by Me in various Vedic scriptures possess favorable qualities that purify the performer, and he knows that neglect of such duties constitutes a discrepancy in one's life. Having taken complete shelter at My lotus feet, however, a saintly person ultimately renounces such ordinary religious duties and worships Me alone. He is thus considered to be the best among all living entities." (SB 11.11.29-31)

The purpose of *sannyasa* is to please Krsna (*gopi bhartuh pada kamalayaṁ daśa daśanudāśaḥ*). *Bhakti-sannyasa* is only *prema*. Externally one accepts *sannyasa* to preach the glories of Krsna, Lord Caitanya, and the devotees. One constantly sings about them because he loves them so much. A *sannyasi* will greatly please the Lord by such glorification of Krsna and His devotees. People will also have faith in hearing from a *sannyasi* who preaches the glories of the Lord. Krsna daśa Kavirāja describes that Lord Caitanya was so inspired to glorify His devotees that He would do so with a thousand mouths.

Internally a *sannyasi* must feel intense separation from Krsna as Mahaprabhu displayed in the Gambhira before His confidential associates, Ramananda Raya and Svarupa Damodara. A true *sannyasi* must internally feel, "I have absolutely nothing to do with this world. The only thing I want is to become the eternal maidservant of Srimati Radhika." One is internally and externally ready to accept *sannyasa* when he has this level of conviction in his mind.

"When Lord Gauranga wanted to take *sannyasa*, no one excelled His devotion, dedication, and renunciation." (*CBAdi-lila*)

Sannyasa Initiation

Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami compiled the *Samskara-dipika* as a manual for Gaudiya Vaisnavas desiring to leave home and enter the *bhiksu asrama* (renounced order of life). Since the time of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, devotees on the path of renunciation have been following this manual. The Gaudiya Vaisnava system for taking *sannyasa* follows the tradition and customs established by Ramanujacarya of the Sri Sampradaya. After purification of the house or temple a Visnu *homa* is performed along with worship of the *acarya sampradaya* and the Panca-tattva using five *puja* articles: incense, ghee lamp, flowers, sandalwood paste, and *naivedya*. *Diksa* is then given.

Samskara-dipika describes the ten *samskaras* for taking *sannyasa* and the meaning of the Gopi-bhava mantra.

Sannyasa Dasa Samskaras

1. Shaving the head—Pray to the barber: "Please leave a *sikha* so I can keep my faith and tie it up at the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu." Then pray to Lord Gauranga, "Oh Lord Caitanya, I am Your eternal servant, but I am most fallen. Please kindly accept me."
2. Holy bath
3. Applying tilaka
4. Nama—Using *candana* or *tilaka* to write the names of Radhika, Gaura, Krsna on the chest. (No burning or branding)
5. Kaupins—Accepting *kaupins* is one of the important and primary rituals of taking *sannyasa*. If one accepts *kaupins* that have been purified and properly sanctified, he can become a great *yogi*. Mahadeva Siva received *kaupins* made by Brahma; Narada Muni received *kaupins* from Ananta; Lord Caitanya took *kaupins* from Kesava Bharati. *Bhutvd dina-ganesakau karunayd kauplna-kanthdsritau*, "In order to deliver the poor conditioned souls, the six Gosvamis accepted loin cloths (*kaupina*) and patchwork quilts (*kantha*), treating themselves as mendicants."

After the proper rituals have been conducted, according to some authorities, then nine different Deities reside within the *kaupins*: Visnu, Brahma, Siva, Vasuki, Vayu, Agni, Candra, Shukra, Brihaspati. Others say only three—Brahma, Visnu, and Siva. Visnu is present in the knot of the waistbelt; Brahma and Siva on the sides. Prthvi (mother earth) or Bhagavati, who represents shyness, is the presiding Deity of the *kaupina* piece that goes from front to back. As a consort of the Lord, the presiding Deity of the *kaupins* is the embodiment of shyness who restrains desires and helps a *sannyasi* to cross the ocean of material enjoyment. The presiding Deity of the *dor* (waistbelt) which supports the *kaupin* is Ananta Deva or Balarama, who upholds a *sannyasi*'s vow by providing spiritual strength and transcendental wisdom. The *sannyasa bahir vasa*, outer cloth or *sannyasa dhoti*, is non-different from the internal potency or the consort of Lord Visnu. Traditionally a *sannyasa* would accept the *kaupins*, *uttariya* (begging cloth), *bahir vasa* (*dhoti*), *kantha* (*chaddar* for cold), begging bowl, wooden peg shoes, and a *danda* (optional). When a Vaisnava adopts the external signs of *sannyasa*, he does so for teaching the general populace the necessity for renunciation in accordance to the scriptures. Actually the goal of everyone interested in Krsna consciousness is to serve the Supreme Lord lovingly without any material hankerings. This objective should be maintained by any and all means, regardless of one's *ashrama*.

6. Prana Pratistha—Installing or giving power to the *kaupins* by chanting particular *bija mantras*, *mantras*, and by offering flowers, incense, and *candana*. The *sannyasa* candidate prays to *his guru* at this time: "Dear Gurudeva! I am stuck in the ocean of, *maya*. You kindly rescue me, and deliver me to the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. For my purification please award me the *kaupins*, because *kaupins* have the ability to destroy material miseries. By wearing *kaupins* I will always remain pure."

7. Nama Karana—Giving a *sannyasa* name. Although there are 108 authorized *sannyasa* names, Srila Prabhupada usually gave one or two names to his *sannyasa* disciples: "Swami" or "Goswami." No matter what other titles and names that *sannyasis* may have, all *sannyasis* are known as "Maharaja." Therefore in the Gaudiya Math, Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada was often referred to as "Swami Maharaja." Basically a *sannyasi* should think, "Now I am totally surrendered to Krsna as His eternal servant." According to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, the acceptance of the *tridandi-sannyasa* order of life is the chief indication that one has actually taken shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. • 8. Mantra Dharana—Accepting the *sannyasa* Gopi-bhava mantra from the spiritual master. *The guru* speaks the Gopi-bhava mantra into the left ear of the disciple. The *Bhagavatam* story of Puranjana, explains that the left ear is used for spiritual *mantras* and the right for

material. "The two ears are situated on the northern side and the southern side. The ear on the southern side (right ear) is very Strong and is always anxious to hear about sense enjoyment. The ear on the northern side (left ear), however, is used for taking initiation from the spiritual master and for gaining promotion to the spiritual sky. The right ear is called *Pitrhu*, which indicates that it is used for attaining the higher planetary systems known as *Pitrloka*. But the left ear, which is known as *Devahu*, is utilized for hearing about even higher planetary systems, such as *Maharloka*, *Tapoloka* and *Brahmaloka*—or yet even higher planets, situated in the spiritual universe, where one becomes more inclined to be permanently situated." (SB 4.25.51 p.) Why is the Gopi-bhava mantra spoken in the left ear at the time of initiation? In Vedic culture the left side of a lady's body is considered pure and the right side of a man's body is considered pure. In the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh ladies give donations with their left hand. In Palmistry, a woman's left hand is read and a man's right. In *Ayur-veda*, the right nostril, which is called *pingala*, represents the heating power of the sun; it is considered masculine. The left side, which is called *ida*, represents the cooling energy of the moon; it is considered feminine. The right ear and right side of the body represent the *purusa-bhava*, the *saktiman*, or masculine, enjoyer aspect of reality. The left ear and left side of the body represent the *prakrti-bhava*, the *sakti*, or feminine, serving aspect. Srimati Radharani and Her various *sakti* expansions are always seen standing on the left side of Their beloveds, be They Krsna, Rama, Visnu, Narayana or Siva. It is the nature of *prakrti* or *sakti* to be on the left side. It is also a universal principle that a woman takes her place on the left side of a man. This observable fact is the natural arrangement of *sakti* and *saktiman* or *prakrti* and *purusa*. Because the Brahma-gayatri, Gopala-mantra, and Kama-gayatri are "*purusa-mantras*" indicating the male gender or Purusottama Krsna, the Supreme male, they are heard in the right ear. The right ear is used to hear Vedic *mantras* that describe *pravrtti-marga*, the path of sense gratification. By such hearing one gets material benefits and improves his material situation. *Mantras* such as the Brahma-gayatri are heard in the right ear because they function within the material world wherein one falsely identifies himself as the enjoyer and predominating master. Chanting such Gayatri *mantras* helps one eventually realize his true identity as the predominated eternal servant of Krsna and attain liberation. The Gopi-bhava mantra, however, is a "*prakrti-mantra*" representing the female energy of Lord Krsna embodied in the *gopis*. The Gopi-bhava mantra is heard in the left or "feminine ear" because this *mantra* establishes one's eternal identity in the spiritual realm as a female *sakti* or serving energy of the Supreme Master. The Gopi-bhava mantra has nothing to do with this mundane world. It reveals one's

eternal form as a *manjari* in the spiritual world wherein Sri Krsna, Gopinatha, is the one Supreme male enjoyer served by countless loving servitors. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu repeatedly emphasized His eternal identity with the words, "I am simply a maidservant of the servants of the servants of Gopinatha, the Lord of the *gopis*." The *sannyasa guru*, being situated *vagopibhava* as a *nitya-sakhi manjari* of Srimati Radhika, wants to give this serving potency or *sakti* to his deserving disciple. Therefore, he whispers the sacred *mantra* into the left ear, which represents the female side or the energy (*sakti*) of the Lord.

9. Accepting the Acyuta-gotra—entering once and for all the eternal spiritual family of Krsna. This state is characterized by the Vaisnava markings of *tulasi kanthi* and *tilaka*, which signify one as an eternal servant of Sri Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Accepting the *acyuta-gotra* means to surrender fully to the authority of the Lord. *Sannyasa* means giving up all material designations of family, friends, and society, and identifying oneself only as a servant of Acyuta in Krsna's eternal blissful family (*gotra*).

10. Archana—after receiving *mantra-diksa*, one must definitely perform some type of worship; either of a Deity, Giri-Govardhana, Salagrama, or a photo. Along with external *puja*, a *sannyasi* will perform *bhuta-suddhi* to purify his body and consciousness, and also perform meditation. He may think, "I am a *manjari* under the shelter of my *guru-sakhi*. By her direction I am assisting as a servant of Sri Rupa Manjari." The *acaryas* warn that if after taking initiation a *sannyasi* thinks, "Now I am *niskincana*. I don't need to do any outer *puja*," he is considered lazy in *archana* and will go to hell. According to Srila Jiva Gosvami, those who have taken *paramahansa vesa* need only perform *manasi-puja* (mental worship of Radha and Krsna's pastimes). However, even the *paramahansas* do some external *puja* by offering flower petals, *candana*, and water to pictures of Guru, Gauranga, and Radh'a-Govinda.

Sri Caitanya's Sannyasa Initiation

"The barber held the razor to Gaurasundara's curly hair. But unable to hold his hand steady, the barber started crying. Sri Nityananda Prabhu and the other devotees fell to the ground and wept. What could the devotees do but grieve and weep? The invisible demigods cried and the unlimited universes were filled with weeping. Exhibiting His pastimes of *karunaya-rasa* to deliver everyone, Lord Gauranga made the stones, dry sticks, and other inanimate objects melt.

"Tasting the nectar of ecstatic *prema*, Gauranga began trembling and shedding streams of tears. Ordering Mukunda to begin kirtana, the Lord stood up and started dancing ceaselessly.

Somehow or other the act of shaving was finally completed. After bathing in the Ganga, Lord Caitanya, the *siksa-guru* of everyone, sat next to His *sannyasa guru*, Kesava Bharati.

"Lord Caitanya said, 'In a dream an exalted person whispered the *sannyasa-mantra* in My ear. Tell Me whether it is the right *mantra* or not.' Speaking thus, Lord Caitanya whispered the *mantra* in the ear of Kesava Bharati. By this trick Lord Caitanya mercifully gave *mantra diksa* to Kesava Bharati, and accepted him as His disciple.

"At that moment a great wonder appeared in the heart of Kesava Bharati. 'This is the best of exalted *mantras*,' said Kesava Bharati, 'You have definitely attained the mercy of Sri Krsna.' By the order of Lord Caitanya, the noble-hearted Kesava Bharati repeated that *mantra* to the Lord. Then the four directions became filled with the auspicious sounds of Lord Hari's holy names. In this way Lord Caitanya, the crest jewel of Vaikuntha, accepted *sannyasa*." (CB *Madhya* ch. 28)

Although the *mantra* is not specifically mentioned in the *Caitanya-bhagavata*, *Caitanya-caritamrta* or any other *sastra*, some Gaudiya *acaryas* say that Lord Caitanya whispered the *mantra* "*tat tvam asi*" into the ear of His *sannyasa-guru* Sri Kesava Bharati. This *mantra* from the *Chandogya Upanisad* is very popular amongst Advaitins and Sankarites who take interpret it as meaning "you are that" or "you are *brahman*."

One thousand years ago Sripad Ramanujacarya gave a personal interpretation of *tat tvam asi* as meaning "you are His." *Acaryas* claim that Lord Caitanya explained the *mantra* in a similar way to Kesava Bharati by repeating "*tasya tarn asi*" which means "you are His" or "You belong to Krsna." This conception harmonizes with the Gaudiya Vedanta of a personal God and with Mahaprabhu's inner mood of Radharani belonging to Him, Her Pranavallabha, Sri Krsna.

The Messenger

In the 1930's, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura gave the following lecture to his *sannyasa* disciples before sending them to Europe to preach Krsna consciousness. Since this lecture clearly defines the proper mood and meaning of taking *sannyasa*, it is relevant for all Gaudiya *sannyasis* at all times and in all places. Indeed, this eloquent lecture should be regularly read and reflected upon by all messengers of Mahaprabhu.

"The happy day has come when we are destined to spread the message of our Great Master to distant corners of the earth. The spiritual service to which we are dedicated has now passed

the bud state and blown fully into a flower whose aroma we must carry across the seas. We must proceed with that willingness which characterized Sri Hanuman when he leapt over the vast ocean with the message of Sri Rama. To extend the spiritual treasure of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to foreign countries is our humble offering at His feet.

"The lotus feet of my Sri Gurudeva attracted me to his service by his manifestation as the living embodiment of these four great precepts: 1) Extremely more humble than a blade of grass; 2) Being as forebearing as a tree; 3) Seeking no honor for himself; 4) By offering due honor to all living entities.

"Srila Prabhodananda Sarasvati, the crest-jewel of the order of *tridandi-sannyasis*, taught the same process to those who assume the renounced order of life. He said, 'Holding a straw between my teeth, falling at your feet, and uttering hundreds of the humblest entreaties I beg: "Oh virtuous soul! Please just throw out everything you have learned, and learn how to love the feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu." ' "Our only duty is to constantly speak about cleansing the mirror of the heart which Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu described in His *Siksastaka*. In all our travels and experiences may we never forget that all living entities in the world are essentially wards of the lotus feet of our Sri Guru for increasing the service of Krsna. We shall call at the door of each and every sincere seeker of truth, bearing on our heads the baggage of the real truth to be offered to them. It is not our business to be elated or discouraged by the praise or neglect of any person. We must be constantly alive to the duty of enhancing the pleasure of our Master (Krsna and Lord Caitanya) by serving Him with perfect sincerity.

"All persons of this world are really superior to us in every way. We do not covet the property of any person or nation. We are merely beggars with the *tridandi* of renunciation devoted to speaking the words of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. We have no higher desirable object than the pleasure of serving Sri Hari, Guru, and the Vaisnavas. The triple *bhiksus* (*sannyasis*) are the living *mrdangas* of Sri Caitanya. Our *danda* must constantly give forth our music at the lotus feet of Sri Guru.

"We must always remember that we have taken *sannyasa* for the sole purpose of proclaiming the heart's desire of Sri Guru and Gauranga. If we are constantly inspired with the duty of discoursing about the truth under the guidance of Sri Guru, than no hankering after traveling, nor any other veiled form of desire besides chanting *harinama* will ever strike any terrors into our hearts.

"The vowed service of the holy name, the transcendental abode, and the desire of Sri Gaurasundara are our eternal function. Our only duty is to tell everyone that complete reliance on the Absolute Truth is by far the highest form of freedom. This transcendental freedom is infinitely superior to the partial independent mastery over the mundane world, the perverted reflection of the spiritual reality.

"Holding a straw between our teeth in supplication, we shall carry aloft that banner of real freedom to all people. We should be constantly engaged in chanting and relishing Krsna's names by adopting as our fundamental enlightening principle that the best path is the path of submission, endorsed by Sri Rupa Gosvami, and maintain the unwavering faith that Krsna will always protects us." (SCT)

Manjari Bhava

"Generally the Gaudiya Vaisnavas follow the footsteps of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. They desire to become one of the assistants of the *gopis* (*manjaris*). Our six Gosvamis were all assistants of the *gopis*. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was always thinking of Srimati Radharani's activities, and the Gosvamis were also thinking of the *gopis'* activities. *Gopis'* activities means to assist Srimati Radharani how to serve Krsna." (SPT 26/4/69)

Srila Prabhupada repeatedly encouraged his disciples to follow in the footsteps of the six Gosvamis of Vrndavana. Specifically, our beloved master taught (*mpa-raghunatha pada hoibe akuti*) that one must become a dust particle at the lotus feet of Sri Rupa (Rupa Manjari) and Raghunatha Dasa (Rati Manjari) in order to understand and serve the *prema-filled* pastimes of Yugal-Kishora.

Moreover, all the Gaudiya Vaisnava *acaryas* following Srila Rupa Gosvami (*nipanuga Vaisnavas*) are in the camp of Sri Radhika. They consider Vrndavanesvari Radha to be their worshipable Queen, and everything they do is for Her pleasure. If Radhika is pleased automatically Krsna will be conquered. *Radha-dasyam*, the divine service of Sri Radhika, is the perfection sought by all sincere Gaudiya *sadhakas*.

Proper Conduct

At initiation *the guru* will instruct the disciple about the proper conduct for a *sannyasi*. A *sannyasi* should constantly meditate upon and worship the Lord. He should be free from *Nama* and *seva aparadhas*. He must worship the *guru*, the *guru-parampara*, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His followers. He must

also chant the holy names; hear *Srimad Bhagavatam*, and observe *vratas* like Ekadasi and Janmastami. He should follow all the Vaisnava *sadacaras*, always respect all Vaisnavas, take only Krsna *prasada*, and always think of Krsna's pastimes. He must always hear from and humbly serve the spiritual master. At all times and in all places he must preach pure Krsna consciousness.

Members of every *asrama* should honor and associate with *sannyasis* that exhibit these qualities. Once a disciple asked, "Srila Prabhupada, there are so many *sannyasis*. If we see the same *sannyasi* many times in a day, should we bow down every time we see him?" Srila Prabhupada: "If you can, of course you should."

(SPCvol.6) The *Vedas* state that a devotee benefits and advances in spiritual life by offering respectful obeisances to a *sannyasi*. And if he neglects to, he must fast for a day. A *sannyasi* that proudly consumes the obeisances of others, however, will himself be devoured by his pride. A *sannyasi* offers the obeisances of others to His *gurudeva* and the *guru parampara* while humbly thinking of them and begging for their mercy. At all times, one must remember that humility is the ornament of a genuine Vaisnava. Regardless of his *asrama*, everyone must always genuinely feel himself to be "lower than a straw in the street."

Prabhupada Quotes for Contemplation

First Qualification

"For a *sannyasi*, the first qualification should be fearlessness. Because a *sannyasi* has to be alone without any support or guarantee of support, he has simply to depend on the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If one thinks, 'After I leave my connections, who will protect me?' he should not accept the renounced order of life. One must be fully convinced that Krsna in His localized aspect as Paramatma is always within. He is seeing everything, and He always knows what one intends to do. One must thus have firm conviction that Krsna as Paramatma will take care of a soul surrendered to Him.

"One should think, 'I shall never be alone. Even if I live in the darkest regions of a forest I shall be accompanied by Krsna, and He will give me all protection.' That conviction is called *abhayam*, fearlessness. This state of mind is necessary for a person in the renounced order of life. A *sannyasi*, or one in the renounced order of life, must be situated in fearlessness, *sattva-samsuddhi* (purity)' and *jñāna-yoga* (knowledge)." (BG 16.1-3 p.)

"Sannyasis must be independent, and not rely on temples to pay his expensive traveling costs. Simply he must take Krsna's mercy whenever and wherever it is offered." (SPL 72/7/40)

Swami Jesus

"My dear daughter Sally Agarwal, I beg to thank you for your kind letter and I have noted the contents carefully. I am glad to learn that you are going to observe the third birthday of Miss Kamala Agarwal on Saturday next. On this occasion I should have presented her some ornaments, but as I am a Sannyasi I can simply offer my blessing for her long life and good prosperity.

"She cannot now read, otherwise at least I should have presented a set of my books. But you set aside one set of my books for her future reading. Then she will grow up as a beautiful and educated girl with full God consciousness. I am obliged to your good daughter for awarding me a good degree as "Swami Jesus" which is actually a great honor for me. Sometimes the Lord speaks through an innocent child. And I take this honor as sent by Lord Jesus through an innocent child, free from all formalities of the current society.

"Lord Jesus preached the message of God, and I have taken up the same mission. It would be good luck for me if I can follow the footprints of Lord Jesus who preached the message of God in spite of all persecution. Lord Jesus is a living example how one(has to suffer in this material world simply for the matter of;

preaching the message^of God." (SPL 19/11/65)

Four Stages

"In the *sannydsa* order there are four stages of upliftment toward perfection: *kuticak*, *bahudaka*, *parivrajaka* and *paramahamsa*. The *sannyasa* in the *paramahamsa* stage is the' spiritual master of everyone." (SPL 30/8/69)

"A *sannydsi*, in the beginning, is supposed to make a small cottage on the border of the village. He does not go home, but his necessities are supplied by his home. This is called *kuticaka*." (SPT 22/8/73) "*Kuticaka* means when from family life, *vdnaprastha*, one takes *sannydsa*. The husband leaves home, and builds a small cottage (*kiitir*) outside the village to live. But because he is not accustomed to beg, some foodstuff is sent from. his home." (SPT 11/3/76)

"Then gradually, when he is practiced, he begs from home to home. He no longer depends on his own home. This is the *bahudaka* stage, which means collecting one's necessities from many places. After some time, when he's little experienced, he

goes from door to door: 'Give me a piece of bread.' This is called *madhukdii*. *Madhukdra* means honeybee. He collects a little honey here and there. This is called *bahudaka*; not to collect a lump sum of food from anywhere. :

"Then as he becomes practiced, he becomes *parivrdjakdcdrya* going village to village preaching the message of Krsna and constantly traveling." (SPT 22/8/73)

"The fourth stage is *paramahamsa*." Lokanatha: 'Do they wear white?' Prabhupada: "The *paramahamsa* is not under any rules and regulation. He can do whatever he likes. *Sdstra* is not meant for him. *Avadhuta*—He is not in the material world, *mahabhava*. That is the last stage of *sannydsa*. When he has sufficiently preached, then he can sit down anywhere. That is *paramahamsa*." (SPT 11/3/76)

"The *sannydsi* reaches the *paramahamsa* stage when he finishes his preaching work and sits down in one place, strictly for the sake of advancing in spiritual life. An *actual paramahamsa* is one who completely controls his senses, and engages in the unalloyed service of the Lord." (SB 5.1.27 p.)

Do the Needful

"Now you are *sannyasi*. *Sannyasi* means responsible. You must be responsible for the spiritual progress of the devotees. You must see that the right standard is being observed in all departments. Just as I am doing. Sometimes I have to manage, go to the bank, keep accounts, preach, give class, write books, and sometimes cook. A *sannyasi* should be expert in all departments. And he should distribute his experience to others, that's all." (SPL 8/11/72)

Successful Preaching

"As a *sannyasi*, your duty is to see that all the devotees are following strictly the regulative principles, chanting 16 rounds, attending the classes, reading our books, and always remaining enthusiastic for executing devotional service. Everyone has got some propensity. The art of preaching is to engage that propensity in the service of Krsna. Whatever we have got—our mind, intelligence, possessions, time, and energies—let them all be used in Krsna's service. Training people in this way will be the success of your preaching work." (SPL 28/1/73)

Love Means Cooperation

"Regarding your question about how the relationship between a *sannyasi* and the temple president should be. My hope is that you will all be able to cooperate together. The temple president is in charge, and the *sannyasi* should not contradict the instructions. But if he sees something wrong, he should bring it out directly to the temple president. Then work it out in a Krsna Conscious way.

"Not that he will try to over-ride the temple president's authority. I want that you all work together cooperatively. Please continue your programs there with great enthusiasm, and try to strictly follow all of my regulations without any deviation. Keep yourself always fixed in Krsna's service. Don't let even a split moment go by being engaged in the service of *may a*. I hope this meets you in good health." (SPL 28/12/74)

Read and Preach

"As a *Sannyasi* and GBC your first duty is to read my books. Otherwise how will you preach? In order to remain steadily fixed in Krishna consciousness there must be a sound philosophical understanding. Otherwise it will become only sentiment. Whenever you find time please read my books." (SPL 5/1/76)

Meaning of Sannyasa Danda

The *sannyasa danda* represents control or restriction of the body, mind, and words. A person who can control the words, mind, and body; or who by his intelligence can give up the attraction to those things which are unfavorable to spiritual advancement is called a *tridandi-sannyasi*. The three rods of the *danda* signify control of the body, mind, and words by engaging them only in the loving service of Krsna.

"By strict control of one's body, mind and speech, the quality of tolerance becomes strengthened, and thus manifests the further qualities of forgiving others, never wasting one's time, detachment from sense gratification, and lack of false pride in one's work." (SB 11.23.32 p.)

"As far as your *danda* goes—if it is too troublesome to carry, there is no need for it. After Lord Caitanya's *danda* was broken by Lord Nityananda, He never carried it again." (SPL 27/9/76)

"After Lord Nityananda broke His *danda*, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, 'A *danda* is the residence of all the demigods.' " (CB *Antya* ch. 2) The Vaisnava *sannyasis* in South India offer *bhoga* to their *dandas*, and keep it sitting in a small cup-like *asana* upon a table when not carrying it. When a *sannyasa* disciple

asked about offering *bhoga* to his *danda*, Srila Prabhupada said that it was not necessary.

Nevertheless, since the *danda* is a sacred staff, it should be respectfully handled. It is improper for *sannyasis* to stand with their *dandas* resting on the ground or the temple floor. The *danda* should be held in the hand or against the chest. When not in use the *danda* should never be placed on the floor.

"One who has not accepted the three internal disciplines of avoiding useless speech, avoiding useless activities, and controlling the life air can never be considered a *sannyasi* merely because of his carrying bamboo rods."

"The word *danda* indicates a *sannyasi's* staff, and *danda* also indicates severe discipline. Here Lord Krsna tells Uddhava that one must first accept these three *dandas*, or disciplines (namely control of the voice, body and mind), within oneself. Merely carrying the three external *dandas* without assimilating the internal *dandas* of bodily, mental and vocal discipline can never make one an actual Vaisnava *sannyasi*.

"A conditioned soul who adopts only the external ornaments of *tridandi-sannyasa* will not actually be able to control the senses. One who takes *sannyasa* for false prestige, making a show of saintliness without actual advancement in *krsna-kirtana*, will soon be vanquished by the external energy of the Lord. (SB 11.18.17 v. & p.)

"This is a Sanskrit word, *sat-nydsa*. This is *sannyasa*. *Sat* means the Supreme, the Absolute Truth. And *nydsa* means renounced. One who has renounced everything for the service of the Supreme, he is called a *sannyasa*." (SPT 12/6/68)

Sannyasa Perfection

"This formal dress is not *sannydsa*. Real *sannyasa* is when you can induce other people to become Krsna conscious and dance in Krsna consciousness. If you can turn one man to become Krsna cpnscious, then your going back to Godhead, back to home, is guaranteed. That is real purpose of *sannydsa*." (SPT 20/2/70)

Srila Prabhupada Takes Sannyasa

"I never thought that I shall accept this renounced order of life. When I was in the midst of my wife and children, sometimes I dreamt that my spiritual master was calling me, and I was following him. When the dream was over, I was little horrified. 'Oh, Guru Maharaja wants me to become *sannydsI*. How can I accept *sannydsa*?' At that time, I was feeling not much

satisfaction that I have to give up my family and become a mendicant. It was a horrible feeling.

"Sometimes I was thinking, 'No, I cannot take *sannyasa*.' But again I saw the same dream. So in this way I was fortunate. My Guru Maharaja pulled me out from this material life. I have not lost anything. He was so kind upon me. I have gained. I left three children, but now I have three hundred children." (SPT 21/10/68)

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu—A Sannyasa Lila

"All glories to the king of Vaikuntha, who has now become the king *oisannyasis*! All glories to the devotees of the Lord! After taking *sannyasa*. Lord Caitanya spent one night in Kantaka-nagara. Calling out, 'Chant! Chant!' The Lord began to dance as His devotees sang an uproarious *kirtana*. The hairs on His beautiful body stood erect like the golden filaments of a *kadamba* flower, and He displayed limitless symptoms of ecstasy such as sighing, laughing, crying, trembling, and perspiring.

"He roared like a lion. Everyone became afraid when the Lord fell to the ground in ecstasy. Throwing away His *danda* and *kamandalu*, the king of Vaikuntha became mad with love for a person who is actually He. While dancing and dancing the Lord embraced His *sannyasa-gitru* and became very happy.

"By the Lord's merciful embrace Kesava Bharati attained *Krsna-prema*. Overwhelmed with ecstasy, the saintly Kesava Bharati threw his *danda* and *kamandalu* far away while dancing and calling out, 'Hari! Hari!' Losing external consciousness, he became intoxicated *withpremamrta*. While rolling on the ground the clothes fell off his body.

"Seeing the mercy that Lord Caitanya had given to Kesava Bharati, everyone repeatedly cried out, 'Hari! Hari!' The Lord's servants became happy upon seeing Him joyfully dance throughout the night with His *sannyasa-guru*. At sunrise, Lord Caitanya returned to external consciousness and bid farewell to Kesava Bharati, saying, 'Entering the forest, I will find Krsnacandra, the Lord of My life.' " (CQAntya ch.1)

Prema Bhiksu—Krsna Takes Sannyasa

"One day Srimati Radhika and Her dearest *sakhis* were sitting in a beautifully decorated *kunja* filled with the sweet fragrance of *beli*, *yuthi*, *madhavi*, *mallika*, and *saphalika* flowers. Maddened bumblebees buzzed around the flowers, cuckoos cooed softly, and peacocks danced joyfully with fanned tailfeathers. A soft, cool breeze was blowing through the flower-filled trees

and creepers. The whole atmosphere of Vrndavana was most pleasant.

"Radhika, Lalita, Visakha, and other *sakhis* were patiently waiting for Syama's arrival. The leaves rattling in the breeze produced a "*kus kus*" sound resembling the patter of Syama's footsteps. Hearing it, Radha thought, 'Oh My Prananatha is coming. Syama will soon be here!' But Krsna is not coming. In the anxiety of waiting for Krsna, Sri Radha felt each moment to be like a millenium.

"As each moment passed, Radha's *vamya-bhava* (left wing mood of opposition) increased more and more. Understanding Her condition, Visakha sent a *duti* (messenger) to search for Krsna. The *duti* returned with the news, 'O Visakha! The proud Saibya, Candravali's friend who has her mood of *daksina-bhava* (right-wing mood of submission), said that Krsna is in Candravali's *kunja*.' Her eyes turning red-hot, Visakha angrily said, 'That unreliable person!'

"Hearing the news, Srimati Radhika started to boil with *abhimana* (contrary feelings of anger and pouting). Biting Her upper lip, She said, 'If Krsna comes—don't let that ungrateful one enter My *kunja*! Going outside to keep guard, Lalita and Visakha assured Radha, 'Don't worry, we won't allow that Capricious wretch to enter Your *kunja*.'

"When Krsna arrived a few minutes later, Lalita bombarded Him with harsh words, 'Stop! No admittance. Get out from here, You unreliable fellow! Our *prana-sakhi* decorated this *kunja* so nicely, but where were You? Why are You coming here so late?' Showing extreme humility, Syama petitioned them with folded His hands, 'Please forgive Me. I am a great offender. Please tell your *sakhi* that I am here begging forgiveness.

"Meanwhile inside the *kunja*, Radhika was hanging down Her head and crying so profusely that the ground became muddied. She was writing something on the ground with Her left forefinger. When Lalita entered, Radha said, 'Has My Pranavallabha arrived yet?' Then overcome *by maan*, Radha began speaking like a mad woman, 'Why should Krsna come here? Let Him be happy with their worship. I don't care anyway. It seems I am destined to suffer. Vraja is full of heavenly damsels eager to please Him. I don't know why I gave Him My heart and soul and loved Him so much. Now let Me burn in the fire of separation, but let Him be happy.' , "Dumbfounded and incapable of responding, Lalita just returned to the doorway of the *kunja*. Seeing Lalita, Krsna said, 'Look, I know your *sakhi* is overcome with *maan*. But I am confident that Radhika will instantly give up this mood of

pouting if you allow Me to enter Her *kunja* and show Her My Syamasundara form.'

"Fuming with anger, Visakha said harshly, 'Ha! You think just by seeing Your Syamasundara form that my *prana-sakhi* will forget everything and become Your maidservant? Get out of here! Get out! You should be ashamed to say this. Is it that You are greedy for Her love, or is She greedy for Your beauty? Let me tell You one thing Krsna. One day You will have to cry again and again for Her love.'

"Disappointed and confused, Krsna went to bank of the Yamuna. Discarding His clothing and ornaments, He began rolling on the sand while crying out, 'O Radhe! Please fulfill My desire!' Inspired by Purnamasi (personified *yogamaya*), Vrnda-devi appeared there with a desire to unite Radha and Krsna. Coming before Krsna, Vrnda-devi said, 'Syama, I understand Radhika is covered by an impenetrable mood of a *maan*. But listen, there is hope if You are ready to do whatever I tell You.'

"Krsna replied submissively, 'Certainly, I will do whatever you say. I am bewildered and do not know what to do.'

'Fine,' said, Vrnda-devi, 'Now listen carefully. First You have to abandon this cowherd dress. Then You have to give up Your peacock feather and stop standing in Your three-fold bending form (*tri-bhanga*). You also have to shave Your head and give up all Your nice curly locks of hair. And This Syama-complexion has to go to. You have to take off Your glistening yellow *dhoti*, put on a saffron garment, and become a *bhiksu* (beggar). You have to throw away Your enchanting *murali* too. Instead I will give You a *khanjani* and teach You a nice song to sing at the doorway of Radhika's *kunja*. If You do all these things, then there is hope You may meet with Radha.'

"Immediately Krsna took on a golden complexioned form wearing *bhiksu-vesa* (the saffron *sannyasa* cloth of a beggar.) Now disguised as a beggar playing His *khanjani*, Krsna went to the doorway of Radhika's *kunja* and sang the song Vrnda-devi had taught Him:

'He Sri Radhe! Until You became overwhelmed with *maan*. You were mad after Krsna's love. Hey Gandharvike! In every way You have captivated the mind and heart of Syama. But today Syama is begging at every door, *Radha-prema\ Rad.ha-prema\ Radha premaV*

"Hearing the beggar's song, Visakha inquired about His purpose. The *sannyasi* explained, 'I have given up everything of this world. I am simply a *prema-bhikari* (beggar of *prema*).'

Then by Lalita-sakhi's arrangement, the "*sannyasi thakura*" agreed to calculate Radhika's fortune by reading the lines on Her forehead. But Visakha informed the *sannyasi* that it would be impossible because Radha is very strict and will never look at the face of any man in this world.

"The *sannyasi* replied, 'What do you mean? Don't you understand? I am a *dandi-sannyasi*. I have no desires and have given up everything. I am a *prema-bhikari*, only begging for love. Why should your *sakhi* be ashamed before such a *dandi-sannyasi*? There is no harm if She lifts Her veil. Then I can calculate Her fortune. I am a pure *sannyasi*', I am not an ordinary man.'

"As soon as Lalita removed Radhika's veil, that *sannyasi* form immediately disappeared, and the Syamasundara form manifested; a gorgeous three-fold bending form with flute, peacock feather, golden garments and nice ornaments. Then Syama's eyes fell on the eyes of Radhika—eye to eye union, and Radha's *maan* vanished." (EOS, adapted)

Sri Sri Gandharvika-Giridhari ki jai!